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## ART'S PED(AGO)GIES

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*Abstract*

Organised around ten theses, this two-part essay sustains that art education's viability comes from the autonomous specificity of art and the singularity of education. It rejects schooled art while it asserts art as a form of *unlearning*. As unlearning, art education is an *agôn* where pedagogy ties desire to knowledge. This reveals the fallacy of *education as a system of coherent necessities*. Art's autonomy means that art *emerges* and *approaches* the world as a *dialectical* state of affairs, where art and education become moments of hegemony. Yet hegemony will only prevail if its contingent conditions are preserved within a *universality of particulars*. This is only attained when art and education are sustained as empty signifiers that reject the myths of measure and correspondence.

When we consider the value of art in our life, Hippocrates's first Aphorism reveals the inherent aporia of death, which is the relationship between art and life. "Life is short, and art [τέχνη] long," he says. Then he adds: "the crisis fleeting; experience perilous, and decision difficult." As we find ourselves pondering why should the aporia of death influence or even articulate what we mean by life's "long art"—indeed its "long *techné*"—we find less consolation in Derrida when he cites Diderot's treatment of the aporia of death as prompted

by Seneca's *De Brevitate Vitae*. The same insufficiency of explanation, embodied in the impossible direction of an aporia, is cited by Derrida (1994, p. 10) as having to do with the identity of a language that "can only affirm itself as identity to itself by opening itself to the hospitality of a difference from itself or of a difference with itself." This prompts a vision of a condition—that of the self. "[S]uch a difference *from* and *with* itself," says Derrida, "would then be its very thing, the *pragma* of its pragmatics: the stranger at home, the invited or the one who is called." (1994, p. 10)

**I. Art education's viability comes from the specificity of art and the singularity of education as autonomous spheres of human endeavour, and as phenomena of human freedom and intelligence.**

As art never died, we never stop talking about it. This is no consolation because in talking *about* art one finds an inevitable paradox that is only matched by trying to make sense of death, knowing that only the dead could talk about it if they could speak. Just as to speak of death is to speak of the brevity of life, to speak of art is to talk about the boundaries beyond which we begin to define it.

Ernst Gombrich famously opens his *Story of Art* stating that really there is no such thing as art, only artists. (1978, p. 4) To stop there, Gombrich's statement would become a cliché. Not unlike death, art is always peculiar, which is why everyone has something to say about it. But here is a caveat: While everyone has something to say about death, only a few have the stoic stamina of a Seneca and the artfulness of a Diderot—as Derrida (1994) has shown—to put

something across that begins to make sense. Likewise, while many have a lot to say about art, and may well continue to say it, what really makes sense is what we *do not say* about art while we invariably continue to *talk* about it.

Gombrich is not exactly being ironic in his opening statement. A couple of pages later he goes on to explain that his story “illustrates the harm that may be done by those who dislike and criticize works of art for the wrong reasons.” (1978, p. 12). Could one say the same for the “right reasons”? Are there any right or wrong reasons for loving or hating art? Gombrich gives the impression that he wants to say everything by denying, from the start, that the story of art deals with other than what we often call “art” for the wrong reasons. Perhaps there is a reason for this, in that ultimately just as death is what happens to people whose life comes to an end, art is something that artists make when they go about living. In the peculiarity and special place that we attribute to art and death, we forget that they form an integral part of life that is what it is, and by which we confront the dilemma of its *speciality*.

Faced with this dilemma, we offer each other the possibility of being *educated* into art, just as we do when suffering bereavement and seek professional help. Just as death is schooled in religion, social work or psychology, schooled notions of art are born from the need to talk about it. However we need to keep in mind that while many art educators are too quick to argue otherwise, art has no actual bearing on the education that acts as its surrogate parent. In contrast, for art and education to make sense for us, they need to be kept separate. No degree of “help” is forthcoming in schooling art because art is neither a process of mourning, nor is it a tool of learning. In art, the *learning* bit comes later, and it is attributed to art for many reasons whose justification (or rejection) lies elsewhere. Those who insist that art is there to

heal or teach, and should therefore find itself ensconced in a schooled educational edifice, are attempting to “rescue” what is not in danger.

This chapter is written in two parts, yet its sections follow each other, each headed by a theme or axiom which sums up each section’s theme, and where all the themes are reproduced at the end by way of providing a summative conclusion. In this chapter I want to draw a clear distinction between art and education by examining the illusive notion of *pedagogy*. Though it is tempting to argue that when I present two statements like: “Education is not art” and “Art is not education,” I am seeking an excuse, or trying to set up some language-game by which I want to say the same thing, and imply the same action, or draw a parallel distinction in mirror image, the case is the very opposite.

To argue that two opposite directions produce two different distinctions is to assert that such a differentiation must eliminate the confusion that is often drawn from an argument about art and education’s *autonomous* claims. There is no mutual inherence in art and education, even when both spheres, in their different ways, entertain their formative and aesthetic attributes through a unitary discipline like art education. As I have argued elsewhere, to make art and education mutually inhere into each other would immediately eliminate them as such, and make them into something else, which is neither artistic nor educational, but which approximates a ventriloquist’s soliloquy. (Baldacchino 2015a) For human beings to claim a sense of autonomy through their artistic and educational *actions*, art and education must remain distinct and therefore autonomous even when they work together as when art education becomes necessary.

Autonomy needs contexts, and many of them. In the diverse practices and assumptions by which we premise our educational and artistic actions, we need to assert how they also identify their sense of freedom, by which we as intelligent beings assert ourselves in the world. The autonomy of our actions does not present an argument for relativism. As we sustain the spheres of art and education as necessities in the contingent relationships that emerge between individual and society, we alert each other to a series of *political* and *aesthetic* questions that, in their singularity, take very different trajectories. It is through such trajectories that humans express meaning in how they unfold infinite ways of thinking and being, by means of what we identify as forms of doing and making.

Presenting a discussion of art and education from political and aesthetic perspectives, this dual chapter embarks on what Ernesto Laclau (1993) identifies as a “process of arguing” that finds its origins in diverse, often conflicting intentions that confirm humanity’s recognition of its historical contingency. They are marked by inevitable points of conflict as well as convergence. These perspectives also explain how art and education continue to be *acted* and *enacted* as autonomous moments of universal singularities, as forms of desire, even as moments of obsession, and as other than what art and education are expected to portend. More so, in their autonomy, art and education could well regain their place in what is often threatened by institutionalized practices that took over the commons and whose vernacular *origins* we once held and spoke. These are the same commons that women and men need time and again to aim to re-appropriate and re-construct, destroy and demolish, in equal measure.

By the same token, just as we speak of political and aesthetic perspectives, contrary to the conventional expectations of art educational discourse, this chapter seeks ways by which art and education could claim their autonomist immanence beyond any form of aesthetic or political legitimization by which a schooled notion of art supposedly takes its place in society.

## ART'S PED(AGO)GIES

### Part 1. EDUCATION IS NOT ART

In a discussion with Lucien Goldmann, on the value of description, understanding and explanation, Adorno makes a case and builds a defense for the dialectic: “A rigorous dialectical thinker should not in fact speak of method, for the simple reason—which today has almost entirely disappeared from view—that the method should be a function of the object, not the inverse.” (Adorno & Goldmann 1977, p. 129) The case built by Adorno is not simply theoretical, but brings us back to the very meaning of *theoria* as that art of our contemplative life by which we equip ourselves to look at the world and at each other in eye and without any hesitation denounce what inhibits our liberty. It is in this concrete struggle that Maxine Greene confronts the freedom in all its dialectical force and reveals that which inhibits and controls our freedom: “There are conference and commission reports, not barbed wire fences in the way,” she says, referring to an educational system that has become the hub of operational oppression. (Greene 1988, p.15) “There are assured, helpful, bureaucratic faces, not glowering antagonists to growth and freedom and an enlarged sense of being in the world.” Indeed the case Greene makes is not simply one that splits the then world of a communist and capitalist globe. Rather Greene sees liberty suffocated everywhere, which is also where the urgency of an art that conspires with dialectical struggle becomes inevitable and necessary: “The ‘weight’ is only dimly felt; yet, for many it is accepted by what Milan Kundera describes: *It must be; es muss sein.*” (Greene 1988, p. 15)



**II. A possible rejection of schooled art is sought in the variegated distinctions that emerge from art's facticity and autonomy where the dialectic takes precedence over method.**

There are things we call 'works of art' in that someone made them and subsequently taught others how to make their own. How or why they are regarded as works of art is always disputed, and our explanations are closer to alchemy than science or art. We also choose to reserve other meanings for art, which we do not attribute to any other object or work. These are also constructs into which we seek to school others and ourselves, as we do with almost everything else in the expectation of socializing art into a world by which we seek to assert art as a matter mostly concerned with the *self and its realization*. This comes from an expectation—often deemed *natural*—where art becomes an instrument or a condition of consensus that is then reinvested in the constructive appropriation of the world's commons.

Once art is schooled, we begin to believe in the myth of our aesthetic identity as a realization of an exclusive truth. As a *learnt* prospect, identity warrants that art is synonymous with education. It is easy to see how this comes from the assumption that art is a form of learning; that we can educate *through* art; that art denotes what is *appropriately appropriated*, as if it was never within our reach before we could turn it into a form of knowledge, and even a special kind of *intelligence*. Many would rejoice that art enjoys this recognition while others even insist that the State should always do so, hardly realizing the risks that this would imply. However once art is seen as *another* (and an *other*) form of

intelligence, it also means that art could be taken to market not just as a work of art, or an object that we make, but also as a competence, or an identifiable skill that could be sold.

Once at market, art also makes a good tool, or a machine, that far from simply allowing us to do something with it, we expect it to do something for us. Illich makes no bones about this: “it turns out that machines do not ‘work’ and that people cannot be schooled for a life at the service of machines.” (Illich 2009a, p. 10) This expectation is at the root of our failure to live convivially. Rather, we seem to be all too ready to barter our freedom with instrumentalized reason in the forms of schooled learning and creativity while we stand to lose our autonomy:

The crisis can be solved only if we learn to invert the present deep structure of tools; if we give people tools that guarantee their right to work with high, independent efficiency, thus simultaneously eliminating the need for either slaves or masters and enhancing each person’s range of freedom. *People need new tools to work with rather than tools that ‘work’ for them.* They need technology to make the most of the energy and imagination each has, rather than more well-programmed energy slaves. (Illich 2009a, p. 10, emphasis added)

As art becomes a tool for learning—or indeed as art *is seen* as an identifiable tool that supposedly facilitates creativity—confusion often comes in between instrumentalism and instrumental thinking and doing where art becomes a tool that ‘works’ for us. This reduces us to spectators. We glorify art but only insofar as we can get something out of it—as it attracts consensus, prestige or fame and money, or a sense of peace and wellbeing.

Illich’s distinction between what we make of tools and what tools do for us is too quickly dismissed from both ends of the spectrum. There are those who see tools as instruments that

would approximate the idea of a means by which we can gain autonomy, where as Dewey contends, instrumentalism is “thoroughly realistic as to the objective or fulfilling conditions of knowledge [and where] [s]tates of consciousness, sensations and ideas as cognitive, exist as tools, bridges, cues, functions—whatever one pleases—to affect a realistic presentation of things, in which there are no intervening states of consciousness as veils, or representatives.”

(Dewey 1905, p. 325) Indeed, Illich argues that, not unlike Dewey:

Individuals need tools to move and to dwell. They need remedies for their diseases and means to communicate with one another. People cannot make all these things for themselves. They depend on being supplied with objects and services that vary from culture to culture. Some people depend on the supply of food and others on the supply of ball bearings. (Illich 2009a, p. 11)

On the other hand, instrumentalism raises the issue of control and manipulation where those tools that are meant “to ‘work’ for” us, as Illich put it, begin to sustain a state of instrumentalism where as Horkheimer argues, “the more ideas become automatic, instrumentalized, the less does anybody see in them thoughts with a meaning of their own.” (Horkheimer 1974, p. 21-22) Here, we begin to critique the expectation of instruments by which humans forfeit their autonomy. This is echoed by Illich when he states that, “Present institutional purposes, which hallow industrial productivity at the expense of convivial effectiveness, are a major factor in the amorphousness and meaninglessness that plague contemporary society.” (Illich 2009a, p. 11)

Without going off at tangents and enter into Illich’s discussion of how the estrangement of humans from tools and the proscription of conviviality come about in the first place by a

scarcity where the sense of instrumentalism (as identified by Dewey) finds itself institutionalised, it is important to accentuate Illich's view of an alternative state of affairs:

As an alternative to technocratic disaster, I propose the vision of a convivial society. A convivial society would be the result of social arrangements that *guarantee for each member the most ample and free access to the tools of the community and limit this freedom only in favor of another member's equal freedom.*

At present people tend to relinquish the task of envisaging the future to a professional élite. They transfer power to politicians who promise to build up the machinery to deliver this future. They accept a growing range of power levels in society when inequality is needed to maintain high outputs. Political institutions themselves become *draft mechanisms to press people into complicity with output goals. What is right comes to be subordinated to what is good for institutions.* Justice is debased to mean the equal distribution of institutional wares. (Illich 2009a, p. 12, emphases added)

Instrumentalized as a tool for education, or health, or any form of care or wellbeing, art begins to do what is good for institutions. It gradually enters a sphere of 'needs' that are made scarce and given a price, and thereby identified with investment and profit. Art's price gains enough interest that the faculties by which humans are engaged with art leave the realm that Kant (1974 §2) reserved for the faculty of disinterested taste. For some, this means that art is no longer detached from practice and human reality. Yet this constitutes the very opposite, because as Kant has amply shown, in the realm of *interestedness* there is no place for autonomy, let alone for a sense of "purpose without purposiveness". (Kant 1974 §11)

Those who claim to emancipate art from some elitist sphere, wrongly denounce non-purposiveness as exclusivist, which actually means that either they cannot understand art's need for autonomy, or they understand art so well that they also know that the only way to kill art's power of distinction is to make art 'democratic'. Again, just as instrumentalism takes on a dual meaning (which are best represented by Dewey and Horkheimer's respective positions), the notion of a speciality in art (the defenders of which are often misconstrued as *elitists*) is confused with what Illich calls the relinquishing of a vision and leadership 'to a professional élite,' which in this case would want art to enter the realm of interestedness and scarcity as this would command a high price of socio-economic privilege.

Those who preserve art as a scarce instrument of education, care, health and wellbeing, would be the first to claim that they are putting art within the democratic sphere—just as they do with education, health, social work, care and wellbeing. In this democratic condition, art has no choice but to survive insofar as it becomes a form of socialized knowledge that is aimed at limiting the degree to which we could partake of it. Like education, health, and other spheres of human activity that have been democratised, art becomes equivalent to a practice of normality where the speciality of the aesthetic (which is one of those abilities by which human beings, even when enslaved, could reclaim a sense of autonomy) is proscribed.

This is where those who decry Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of instrumentalism as being 'elitist' mistake the idea of democracy with that of a service, or an instrumental sphere that would absorb all forms of human activity into a notion of growth and progress. In terms of art, and to many extents education, the democratisation of art is not that different from the

Stalinist commissar and the Corporatist entrepreneur's shared assumption that art's speciality is a bourgeois concept that must be subsumed and socialised respectively.

With democracy understood as a well calibrated machine that is expected to compute, weigh and yield rights and justice, to democratise art is to make it scarce enough to reserve, control and sell, just as we do with schooled education whose constructs of inclusion begin to draw the boundaries within which the polis is clearly enclosed. And let us not delude ourselves: This political machine is up and running, often justified on the pretext of electoral and juridical mechanisms that see the most autocratic governments being elected to exercise their 'right' to suppress any notion of autonomy, and doing so in the name of liberty and social justice.

With the rise of neo-liberalism and that of top-down systems of governance which claim to be legally elected by confirmed majorities, democracy has moved beyond sociocratic notions of conviviality, or liberal forms of associated living dreamt by Illich and Dewey respectively. For several decades, we have seen it coming. We are now witnessing democracies of sorts, reserved to those who are allowed to speak and make tools of exclusion out of art, culture, education, health, and wellbeing. For many democracies, anyone else is just a barbarian refugee coming into our homes to take our privileges, to enjoy our health, education and wellbeing. Even political parties that remain ideologically pitted against social welfare are now crying out without any shame or decency that the welfare state is not open to all.

The sacred alliance by which these democrats are once again aligning themselves with anti-immigrant fascists is all too prepared to appear philanthropic insofar as it keeps a reserved kind of political, educational and artistic ascendancy intact. Even when they speak of

multiculturalism and bicker with their racist counterparts, these latter-day proponents of democracy actually mean assimilation, as if it were better to culturally breed an aboriginal race out of existence than murder gays, Roma, Jews, Armenians and Slavs in subsequent genocides.

The tragedy is that we seem to be all too happy to confuse elitism with the comfortable finesse by which expertly connoisseurs of whatever social standing, perpetrate their existence in museums and art collections, in theatres and galleries, in shrines for beauty. In such delectation, violence and hatred are quickly tenderised by what Maxine Greene (1988, p. 15) calls the odourless “gas chamber of everyday life”—which often includes the arts and education, particularly when in being sold as scarce, they are turned into a unified instrument called *art education*.

**III. Art seeks to unlearn the grammar of an ideational prototype. As unlearning, art thereby confirms our contingency. By asserting their own vernacular understanding of the world, women and men reaffirm freedom and intelligence on whose horizons art regains autonomy.**

### **Socrates and the Sheikh**

Who is this old man who leaves his home each morning to walk about, getting as much experience as he can?

He is the Sheikh, the teacher of Arabic, who was retired more than twenty years ago.

Whenever he feels tired he sits down on the pavement, or on the stone wall of the garden of a house, leaning on his stick and drying his sweat with the end of his flowing *gallabiya*. The quarter knows him and the people love him; but seldom does anyone greet him, because of his weak memory and senses. He has forgotten relatives and neighbors, students and the rules of grammar. (Mahfouz 1998, p. 6)

[Socrates] heard me out, and then said with that ironical simplicity of his, My dear Alchibiades, I've no doubt there's a lot in what you say, if you're right in thinking that I have some kind of power that would make a better man of you, because in that case you must find me so extraordinarily beautiful that your own attractions must be quite eclipsed. And if you're trying to barter your own beauty for the beauty you have found in me, you're driving a very hard bargain, let me tell you. You're trying to exchange the semblance of beauty for the thing itself (...) But you know, my dear fellow, you really must be careful. Suppose you're making a mistake, and I'm not worth anything at all. The mind's eye begins to see clearly when the outer eyes grow dim — and I fancy yours are still pretty keen. (Plato 1989, p. 570)

With all his zest for irony, Socrates knew well that his quest for knowledge was a lifelong attempt to recover from the predicaments of life. The old philosopher was tireless. His answers loathed a quick fix. His argument looked more like a haggling match in a flea market than a ponderous fit of academic drama. He drifted from one set of questions to another. He sought answers by the same viciousness with which an obsessed pervert would stalk his victims. The old philosopher's scorn was violent. He waited for the moment when his opponent would falter and botch logic with opinion. In his dialogues with young men



Socrates knew that his love for youth went beyond carnal attraction. His eyes were set elsewhere: on an eternal kind of knowledge that a soul without “us” must have enjoyed before we were born. He constantly yearned for the mansions of perfection where the soul was said to be free from the limits of the body.

Unlike the philosopher, the Sheikh lost no sleep on the tricks of memory and logic. He was oblivious of the past. Thanks to his amnesia, he was free from any worries about the future. He turned out to be a good unlearner. His forgetfulness may have been caused by senility, but there were moments in which he took advantage of this liberation and wilfully forgot what happened around him. He stuck to what mattered, and he wizened up to what he chose to remember. Unlike Socrates, the Sheikh forgot and unlearned his grammar and stood beyond the old Greek’s ruminations about the mind. During the walks which he took, aimlessly and without any destination, the old Alexandrian got rid of grammar. He bettered himself by what the old philosopher would have deemed useless. For the Sheikh it seems that leisure took over the need for grammar and logic.

Here is a clear case for art’s unlearning. Plato and Mahfouz both wrote with poetic enjoyment. Yet while the latter saw himself as an artist, despite his poetic abilities the former saw himself as art’s opponent. The difference between art and philosophy in the Platonic tradition has been discussed in millions of pages, but a missed point is that Plato’s argument for education as anamnesis, as a form of recollection, begins to articulate an interesting theory of unlearning by default. If learning is through and through a form of remembering, which goes in the same direction as that of philosophy, mathematics, and logic, art goes the other direction, as it seeks to distance the soul’s knowledge from its ideal origins through mimesis

and the emotions. In this respect one could well agree and argue that art's pedagogy is a form of forgetting, a form of unlearning—which is where Mahfouz's Sheikh becomes exemplary.

### **Memory, Grammar ... and Forgetfulness**

Let us imagine a dialogue between Socrates and the Sheikh. In their chatter they would share their wisdom over the recollection and forgetfulness of all those cherished words, their friendships and teaching and (of course!) their engagement with grammar. Socrates would perhaps understand the Sheikh's predicament, insisting—for once without irony—that he also led a life of negotiation between forgetting what one knows and knowing what to forget. Socrates would delay his logic and sit down with the Sheikh, who in turn might just toy with his *gallabiya* while reminiscing about yesterday's walk in the dusty streets of old Alexandria as it would have happened in his youth.

This is a dialogue between memory, knowledge and grammar. It describes a moment where *beginning to remember* could also mean *beginning to understand what needs to be known, by what must be forgotten and unlearned*. We know that what we learn is more than a glimpse or a moment of recollection. What we know sets the limit to what we await to know. The Sheikh forgot his relatives and neighbours by forgetting the rules of grammar. The moment of grammar is so important that we hardly realise that we have lived it, and have been its protagonists for a long time. In every life, as in every step in the construction of our individuality, the moment of grammar has its brief yet intense glory. We know all this and we say it even when we keep it to ourselves because our aim to live is primarily an act of self-preservation. Each moment of our life is a victory over the limits of life itself. Aware of the

certainty of death, we extend our lease of knowledge into the *beyond*; which implies a risky guess that we often consign to the mechanisms of faith, rather than grammar.

The Sheikh forgot his grammar and regained a kind of happiness that Socrates would deem impossible. Yet Socrates and the Sheikh shared the centrality of grammar: the latter grew out of it, unlearned it; the former would never let go and stalked it until it killed him. Both knew (at some point) that they had their encounter with the love that bore them the child of wisdom. One wonders whether in his blissful walks, the Sheikh's love of wisdom glowed with a brilliance that would have outshone the grammatical arrogance of the dialogic teacher.

### **Lego and Scrabble**

Whether the Sheikh's intended forgetfulness would ever win the day is beyond the point of this argument. What is at stake is the *sense* one makes of the memory by which we *construct* knowledge (as *epistémè*, as accrued knowledge), as distinct from the ways we *live* knowledge (as *gnosis*, as knowing to be). Everyone expects a result, especially when taking the trouble to reflect upon one's life. Everyone wants to make sense of the plural moments of personal encounters that are in turn expressed by one's opinions, intentions, and day-to-day living. This is because opinion, intention and living form an integral part of what we expect from the rules of grammar by which we try to express ourselves. Yet it is also true that when the Sheikh forgot the rules of grammar, there was a willed form of freedom, as it began to unlearn and undo what was imposed upon us by grammar's schooled forms of life by which, Illich (2009b, pp. 72-74) reminds us, we lost the vernacular possibilities and with them the

plural universe of singularities. Upon unlearning his grammar, the Sheikh enjoyed his life as he regained his appreciation for a vernacular world that was less troubled by the logic by which Socrates was afflicted.

Contentions over life and happiness, rules and grammars, expectations and duties, do not spare us from equivocation. Here, it may be worth considering Quine's attention to the drift with which the rules of grammar seem to influence our continuous attempt to establish some meaning for our talking:

Language is perpetually in flux. Each of us in learning his own language depends heavily on analogy, interpreting or fabricating further phrases by analogy with phrases we have learned before; and this same force of analogy reacts upon the language itself over the years, leveling exceptions and forcing odd forms into a more common mold. *Swelled* supplants *swole*, and *thrived* *throve*, because inflection by suffix is more usual in English than inflection by change of vowel. (...) Language is always under the pressure for regimentation, what the Nazis called *Gleichschaltung* [*bringing into line, making the same*]. Granted the trend is sporadic; we can continue to treasure *mice*, *lice*, *dice*, *geese*, *men*, *women* and *children* (Quine 1978, p. 110).

The regimentation by which grammar encroaches our language is found in words whose shape and sound yield a diversity of meanings. But before one gets excited over a presumed infinity of supplemental possibilities, diversity is wrenched by standards of intelligibility as assumed by power. Albeit plural, semantic diversity is only afforded up to a point: as long as it serves as an instrument—the same instrument by which during the last decade of the 15th century, the grammarian Elio Antonio de Nebrija, author of *Gramatica Castellana*,

formalized and used the Castilian language as an instrument of accrued power for the court of Queen Isabella, thus imposing a universal construct on the plural dialects of daily life across the whole of Spain.<sup>1</sup>

Quoting the Bishop of Avila, Nebrija's justification of his grammar does not seem that distanced from the Nazi's concept of *Gleichschaltung*, intended to bring *in line*—and indeed *streamline*, to use modern managerial speak—everything and everyone:

Soon Your Majesty will have placed her yoke upon many barbarians who speak outlandish tongues. By this, your victory, these people shall stand in a new need; the need for the laws the victor owes to the vanquished, and the need for the language we shall bring with us. (Cited in Illich 2009b, p. 49)

Words and agreed meaning are like a *Lego* set. A child's game, *Lego* also works for adults presented with a complex structure by which they must build a number of objects. Here, *Bildung* is killed off. Bereft of its dialectic, *Bildung* is no more. This is a structure built from a simple mechanism where all shapes are meant to fit in any “creative” way a child, or indeed a manager, banker or teacher on some corporate training session, wants to. Yet this diversity is regimented by the necessity of connectivity, which, in turn, offers a world that must be learnt, a world that regards paradox as mistake, as nonsense.

It is a given that *Lego* bricks must all fit, even when their shapes and colours are different. The condition of a *Lego* brick is *a priori* universal. *Lego* blocks that do not fit are not *Lego* bricks. Before any proof or any conclusive confirmation, the *Lego* brick is assumed as universal. There is no choice: it is either universal prior to being assembled with other *Lego*

bricks, or it will never be a legitimate Lego brick if having tried to use it, one finds it does not work.<sup>2</sup>

In his book *Kierkegaard The Indirect Communication* Roger Poole (1993, p. 53) remarks that “Lego is omni-usable, omni-adaptable.” “Thus, in any specific context, the game of locking brick onto brick, of defining an old term in a new context, or a new context in old terms, is easily carried out,” explains Pool. “Objective and subjective, positive and negative, can be fitted into any Lego context whatsoever.” (Poole 1993, p. 52)<sup>3</sup>

The way words seem to be streamlined or regimented irrespective of their shape, sound or meaning, strikes me as similar to the *a priori* condition of a Lego brick. It could be a question of play; of making do with other speakers in society; of having to operate with each other. It may have to do with the playfulness of poetic reconstruction where sounds are instruments of meaning, albeit uttered as words. Whether these words pertain to the brain of a humanity of makers, a political animal, a thoughtful person or a playful being, the human uttering of words is an act of universality that is assumed prior to any use or experience. In this respect, the regimentation of words sets the context for a meaning that ‘awaits’ our intentions.<sup>4</sup>

This state of affairs gives another function to regimentation, where words (and how they are uttered) make a case for the world as a meeting-place of recollections. The world is a grander and wider depository of all those memories by which we could piece one word with another. It is where we could interpret, as well as fabricate, “further phrases by analogy with phrases we have learned before.” (Quine 1978, p. 110) Such is the simplicity of the mechanism of words, their meaning and their context, in their universal character, that power is easily used to wrench grammars onto a vernacular world.

Universality is also a practice of words that are recollected and reconnected as we do in a composite building of *Scrabble* pieces. Like *Lego*, *Scrabble* is another game that mimics the way we order the world universally, by creatively adhering to presumed grammars that suppress any deviation. Like the monad, words and Lego bricks are intelligent substances. They are “a simple substance which enters into compounds: *simple* that is to say, without parts.” (Leibniz 1995, §1, p. 179) Words and Lego blocks are universal by force of their simplicity. Their rule is clear: *simplicity* = *universality*. The minimum is the total. The smallest quantity is the largest possible quality. Likewise, their modality is simple and universal: it is exchangeable because it is equitable and appears to belong to a presumed *common sense*. In this relational context one can see how the grammatical nature of our words makes the construction of truth in any way possible, thereby conditioning the same truth by its presumed possibility.

### **Dialects of Unlearning**

Communities in which monolingual people prevail are rare except in three kinds of settings: tribal communities that have not really experienced the late neolithic, communities that for a long time lived through exceptional forms of discrimination, and among the citizens of nation states that, for several generations, have enjoyed the benefits of compulsory schooling. To take it for granted that most people are monolingual is typical of the members of the middle class. Admiration for the vernacular polyglot unfailingly exposes the social climber. (Illich 2009b, p. 67)

Social constructivist arguments for education have become more and more vulnerable upon finding themselves being thrown right against those notions of equity and diversity in support of which social constructivism originally emerged. The tautological nature of this state of affairs is so obvious that some take it as a sign of truth. Many teachers and artists alike would not accept the argument that to universalize art and education is to make it vulnerable. Many socially committed artists and educators fail to accept the danger by which the socialization of art and education actually proscribes (rather than enables) children and adults from participating in art and education's power of consciousness. In schooling, this is a pervasive danger, and remains present even in pedagogical systems that predominantly accentuate the use of criticality, play, learner-centeredness, and the like.

This happens when discussions of social consciousness through education and art fail to include a caveat, stating that when one speaks of art and education as autonomous spheres of action and meaning there must also be an appreciation of how, in their autonomous sense of immanence, both art and education have been able to articulate those respective dialectical logics by which women and men could regain and enjoy their vernacular understanding of the world.

Many seem to forget, or ignore the fact that in this age of standardization, to resort to social assumptions of art and education may well reinforce the universalist suppression of the vernacular world of meaning and living from where art and our claims for education have emerged in the first place. Liberal, progressive and critical teachers and artists often forget that in a schooled society, one's effort to emancipate others is turned on its head, and finds itself contributing to a massive loss of communication across almost all aspects of living.



Before anyone else, in the 1930s Dewey (2000) was already anticipating this state of affairs in his book *Liberalism and Social Action*, where he shows how while many claimed freedom and emancipation as their liberal duty, it turned out that their actions caused more oppression than ever before. Dewey called this pseudo-liberalism. While some would call this an anticipation of neo-liberalism, I would be inclined to regard it as the manipulated degeneration of the dialectic of democracy that follows from the elimination of the vernacular imagination.

The vernacular world is that very same creative world which we seem to think—in our arrogance—that we could outwit given that we have schooled the arts and language to such heights that we could empirically measure every aspect that it throws at us. As we look again at the vernacular spheres of living, we realize how education could revalue and recognise the *dialects* by which we could consciously unlearn the grammars that have suppressed our knowledge of life trans-subjectively, and through the lenses of particularity.

Dialects come before they become dialectical or dialogical. A dialect is localised in the context by which our words are formed. It holds onto its turf. It is aggressive and pugilistic. This is where we pack our historical baggage and hope that we find the joy of the *caminar* by which poets like Antonio Machado and Konstantin Kavafis urge us to keep the destination in our heart, and locate the sense of living in that of travelling by which we speak and talk about *walking*.

The land of ultimate understanding is always present in the wishful thinking of our own understanding of the world. Where we go, we learn how to speak other than one dialect. Again and again, we pack and go, with Socrates and the Sheikh, around Alexandria and

beyond, and visit old friends, neighbours, lovers, and students whose reluctant infancy has turned their joyful play into a wondering urge to win a game of *Scrabble*.

**IV. Art reveals how pedagogy moves beyond mere technical procedure. By dint of education's singularity, *pedagogy* provides an agôn, an opportunity for argument that stems from the recurrent moments of human expression in the moments of *information* and *infatuation*. Being coextensive and never deterministic, information and infatuation broadly explain how by its intimacy with knowledge and desire, pedagogy takes an immanent form.**

### **Agnes and the Radio**

An early-morning news programme comes on, but I am hardly able to make out the individual words and once again I fall asleep, so that the announcer's sentences merge into my dreams. It is the most beautiful part of sleep, the most delightful moment of the day: thanks to the radio I can savour drowsing and waking, that marvellous swinging between wakefulness and sleep which in itself is enough to keep us from regretting our birth (Kundera 1991, p. 5).

One would assume that rather than morning languor, what keeps us from regretting our birth is the wakefulness of reason. At least when it comes to define reality, we often take it for granted that our hopes are found in those moments of absolute clarity when we could say with some certainty that we could distinguish dream from reality.

Yet, in Kundera's story this seems to be the reverse. Any solace from the limits of mortality has to come from a blurred feeling of suspension between dream and reality. In essaying on immortality, Kundera defers any temptation to resolve this feeling. In his enigmatic love towards a person who appears to be neither real nor fictitious, he refuses to set strict benchmarks for what may be a truth or simply a fallacious figment of the imagination: "And then the word Agnes entered my mind. Agnes. I had never known a woman by that name." (Kundera 1991, p. 4)

Agnes came to him by chance when he saw a middle-aged woman whose girlish gesture triggered in him the memory of someone who meant a lot to him. His mind came across meaning as an experience of the present. This presence was constantly prompted, if not haunted, by an unknown past. Although the contents of that past remain unknown, he knew they belonged to the past and not the present. The past was expressed by gestures made in the present. The gestures took the form of a particular smile and a specific signal expressed by the lady in a swimsuit. These acts of the present suspended Kundera's memory between the knowledge of someone's smile, and a human gesture that belonged to a twenty-year old woman.

At some stage Kundera utters the name 'Agnes'. 'Agnes' gives him the means by which he could participate once more in the wakefulness of reason. However, this wakefulness is peculiar to the radio and how the sounds it makes extend the suspended moment between dream and wakefulness. The radio may well have been transmitting the news, but this is irrelevant to the person who is waking up. The sounds of the radio signal the moment

between reality and the dream, even when dream and reality are indistinguishable from mere sounds.

At this particular point, the idea of time (expressed by the news as well as the radio doubling as an alarm clock) is omitted from the normal perception of reality. Time seems to be suspended, and so are the limits set between birth and death. In this respect our sense of mortality conjures a contradiction as if it were to borrow extra time in an imagined timeless zone. This is swiftly adjusted by the rational ways of our brain. However it is easy to see why this suspension provides us with what Kundera (1991, p. 5) regards as a “marvellous swinging between wakefulness and sleep which in itself is enough to keep us from regretting our birth.”

We may recall the ambiguity of a similar “swinging” sense in Thomas Nagel’s claim that:

observed from without, human beings obviously have a natural lifespan and cannot live much longer than a hundred years. A man’s sense of his own experience, on the other hand, does not embody this idea of a natural limit. His existence defines for him an essentially open-ended possible future, containing the usual mixture of goods and evils that he has found so tolerable in the past,” says Nagel. “Having been gratuitously introduced to the world by a collection of natural, historical, and social accidents, he finds himself the subject of a *life*, with an indeterminate and not essentially limited future. (Nagel 1991, pp. 9-10)

## **Existence and Reality**

Kundera takes advantage of this open-ended possible future. Actually, this possibility is not limited to the future, but has a lot to do with the experience that shapes the past. What is even more daring is that the suspension between wakefulness and sleep would suggest a way of defining the present—often regarded as a split-second trapped between the past and the future.

By taking advantage of the open-ended possibility of our own mortality, we seek to eliminate the distinction between *existence* and *reality*. If, for the sake of argument, one regards existence and reality as terms by which we could define a ground that stands ‘between’ mortality and immortality, then to cover this ground—to travel *within* it—would also imply an ability to eliminate this distinction.

It is reasonable to expect that at some point in life one could get over the distinctions between one’s immediate experience of life and the point where one gains a larger sense and understanding of the world. After all, if life is partly expressed by our own understanding of what the world throws at us in the form of a collection of natural, historical, and social accidents, then why should we remain suspended between a sense of finitude and an ambition to universality? Even when we know that what informs our experience is only partial to what we know of *reality*, it is not outrageous to argue that we can go beyond our first-person experience of the world. In this way we could assume a set of meanings that would transcend the subject-object divide.<sup>5</sup> While *existence* may well represent the starting point from where we constantly attempt to travel beyond the limits of space and time, reality represents the point where we know that humans could still imagine a world beyond their spatio-temporal *dialects*.

Rather than a constant drive of progress from the known to the unknown, this transit is more of a toing and froing. Far from an accident, this open-ended possibility provides us with a meeting place—and indeed a ground—for learning. The movement from the *wished-for* to the *possible* and onto the *impossible*, is an act of *pedagogy* where what we learn is not simply given to us by a body of knowledge, but it comes from the ‘accidental’ ways by which we relate existence to reality.

Kundera’s story could well provide us with a closer view of this meeting-place. Here we find two senses to this movement: (a) the knowledge that comes from experience; and (b) the sense of self as it reacts to memory. In the first sense (a) the name Agnes stands for ‘a sense of being’. One could term this sense as that of Agnes as *ontological information*. In the second instance (b), the individual discovers that memory defines the self by accidental moments such as a smile or a face. Though the incident is casual, the feeling is intense, and to that effect, it takes over one’s line of reasoning. Here, the name Agnes becomes a moment of *pedagogical infatuation*.

### **Information and Infatuation**

At face value, the link between ontological information and pedagogical infatuation could be dismissed as merely playful. With information dealing with knowledge and infatuation with a feeling verging on obsession, it seems more sensible to speak about pedagogical information than ontological infatuation. However the suggestion of an infatuation that pertains to learning and information as a fact of being, has to do with a link that could only be

thinkable in the contexts that are initially presented to us by Kundera's story. But I would hasten to add that once we remember that these are not separate states of affairs, this *initial* connection does not fail to come into effect in our day to day contexts of learning and being—this time from outside a literary context like Kundera's.

In the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the fourth meaning given to the word 'inform' is 'impart its quality, to permeate.' Given we do not have a word in English that integrates a rational assimilation of information with the rather sensual feeling of infatuation, the fourth meaning of *inform* begs a context that is other than that of attributing meaning to an object or situation. Here I am looking for a word that links *inform* with a quality that would transport an act (in this context, we are talking of a smile and a gesture) into the realms of the senses by other than reason. By itself this *fact*—or better, this *act*—is neither tangible nor audible. It is a bit like a fragmentary moment of awareness. In Kundera's story it is a moment represented by a vague recollection of a smile. The smile leads to a moment of intense feeling. The smile informs the senses through a complex set of memories which, though vague, have an effect on one's entire being.

This kind of information is an ontological affair. The effect it has—what it *leads* to — is pedagogical. Admittedly, the notion of *pedagogical infatuation* is rather odd, but it does suggest something other than the common meanings of infatuation and pedagogy. When a passionate memory of a gesture and smile *leads* to a sense of being where meaning is just a hint of the double meaning of a name (Agnes), there is more than a story to be told. This information is *pedagogical* because it has to do with what the ancient Greeks meant by the word *ágo*, from where we get the word *pedagogy*. Amongst the variety of meanings of *ágo*,

we have ‘to lead away, towards’ and ‘to conduct, convey, to take along’. *Ágo* also implies an act of directing. This is where pedagogy becomes an act of directing the youth—as *paedeia*. This notion of direction is also intended in terms of moving, passing and even marching.<sup>6</sup>

Kundera’s encounter with immortality takes place in the past. Its truth is of a passionate kind. In this way the encounter tries to outsmart time and takes on a concept of space that has nothing to do with actuality. This does not mean that his truth has no presence. To the contrary, Kundera liberates time from chronology and transforms it into *number*.

Here the sense of *number* needs qualification. It has a plural meaning in that it is both a sequential sense of ‘events’, but also implies an incremental sense of the same ‘occurrences’. *Event* and *occurrence* are often conflated in their different meaning(s) by the diversity of senses that *number* takes. However, it is also qualified in that what could have happened (in reality or in the mind, as a semblance or a desired effect) is either a cause for conjecture, or it gives way to an opportunity to play between what is real in the mind and what is existent out there—that is, real in the sense of it happening as a significant event (significant, that is, to the observer—Kundera), whereas it could only be mere existence in terms of its occurrence (which may or may not have any significance to the person being observed—Agnes).

One could imagine a notion of time that is not read in a sequential and numeric manner, where as Bergson suggests, it is considered as duration. But Kundera does the opposite. He invests number with another kind of information. Numeric time becomes *infatuated*—more than *informed*—by a timeless sense of suspension. This invests number with the *a priori* mechanism of words (as we have seen in the analogies of *Lego* and *Scrabble*). Just as one could read number as words, one could rephrase time in a sequence of words. This allows for



the idea of time to become a movement that drifts between those conventions by which we understand the actual notion of time.

### **Pedagogy as Performance and Intention**

John Searle argues that:

In the ontological sense, ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ are predicates of entities and types of entities, and they ascribe modes of existence. In their ontological sense, pains are subjective entities, because their mode of existence depends on being felt by subjects. But mountains, for example, in contrast to pains, are ontologically objective because their mode of existence is independent of any perceiver or any mental state. (Searle 1995, p. 8)

As a moment of ontological *information* Agnes is the object. As pedagogical *infatuation* Agnes is the subject. As a pedagogic memory, Agnes is an awareness that is felt by subjects. As an objective moment, Agnes’ objective being is informed subjectively (as information). If the relationship between subject and object were between two distinct states of affairs, the ontological condition of immortality (*qua* memory) would result in nonsense. This would also mean that knowledge and being would be separate moments, experienced by the person who has to relate to an externalised (objective) process of learning where the person and the process of learning become separated. Also, memory would become schizophrenic, disconnecting possibility from truth.

This connectivity between dream and wakefulness, infatuation and information is by no means a given. The moment of Agnes in its two roles of being and knowledge emerges from a negotiation—and by no means a smooth transition—between truth and possibility. At the moment when the individual becomes conscious of both the radio and the act of wakefulness, the weights of mortality and immortality reach full balance. If there was such an instrument which could gauge the equilibrium between mortality and immortality, where life is and is not real at the same time, we would be able to gauge learning at its fullest. We know however that this is impossible because one could never separate the person from the learning experience, unless of course, we begin to understand how education is also characterised by the need to unlearn. This is what some theories of knowledge and assessment fail to understand when they separate the person prior to learning and after the supposed moment of learning takes place. More so, in their obsession with learning as a unidirectional process, many fail to recognise that unlearning requires that we restore and regain the vernacular tools of conviviality.

As unlearning is consistently overruled by the need for measured and accountable grammars of learning, we have no such instrument. Thus we could only balance the objective with the subjective in the sense by which Searle explains our construction of reality. As in the relationship between information and infatuation, learning is an act where nothing in its objectivity could be possible unless it functions as subjectivity, and where conversely, no subjectivity could be true unless it were objectively placed. This is the basic nature of both knowledge and being, and unless learning is infatuated by knowledge and information permeated by being, there will be no way out of what would be later identified as the anomalous nature of education. This is another way to say that unless the pedagogy also

includes those dialects of unlearning by which infatuation becomes a vehicle of information, then the dualism remains, and our education keeps missing its vernacular roots.

In the balance between drowsing and waking, Kundera's truth bears the name of Agnes. In Agnes the object-subject construct is expressed by a set of words whose form and meaning regard any distinction between reality and existence as irrelevant. The only way to immortality is found in the methods of mortality, by which pedagogy has nothing to lose but those misconceptions propagated by idealists and positivists alike.

One could even read this statement as a legitimisation of pedagogy, where the direction of life (as information-infatuation) constitutes the same immortal moment by which Socrates sought his death, and by which the Sheikh enjoyed a happy life in his amnesiac retirement.

To Socrates the moment of learning is the moment of recollecting a body of knowledge invested in the soul before it was supposedly overwhelmed by the limited existence of the body. In this way Socrates found a way out of the predicaments of mortality by regaling the soul with immortality while despising the body for its alleged misery. But unlike Socrates, we are not privileged by the certainty of theory. If we go by Kundera, memory gives us a sense of preservation: "enough to keep us from regretting our birth." (Kundera 1991, p. 5) The dream is an act of delectation and we know its limits when we negotiate our ambitions within the parameters of truth. A bit more like the Sheikh we have come to the conclusion that happiness pertains to the moment when we unlearn and direct ourselves to an objective world inter-subjectively. We also prefer to seek those moments by which we could entertain the idea of memory as a facilitator of truth as well as beauty.

This is where pedagogy starts to look like an activity that takes on two roles: *intentionality* and *performance*. We have seen how experiential knowledge and the memorial sense of self direct us to the mutual validation of information and infatuation. But this is not possible unless we frame learning in its two roles of performance and intention. As a pedagogical act, performance indicates a series of actions that are seen, understood and valued within specific contexts and conventions. As intention, pedagogy is a structure of conscious representations by which we construct reality in full engagement with the limits and contradictions of our mortal existence.

In its forms of representation pedagogy as intention and performance extends the original ground of knowledge to open-ended possibilities. This positions learning and unlearning in a context of time that is similar to what we considered above: where we consciously play with the conventions of possibility while we remain objectively aware of the actual understanding of time and space. The open-ended nature of performance is related to that of learning as intentionality. Performance is itself intentional and in this respect it constructs reality by a conscious relationship with the limits that are set for us by mortality: “When I wake up, at almost half-past eight, I try to picture Agnes. She is lying, like myself, in a wide bed.” (Kundera, 1991, p. 7)

**V. While as *agôn* pedagogy ties desire to knowledge, by its transitory nature it moves into a third moment: that of the political. A split between *citizenhood* and *citizenship* challenges pedagogy as a political affair. As a schooled moment *citizenhood* is set within a history of standardized monoliths. As we think of a counteroffensive, we await the**

**praxis of citizenship, which is potentially realized through the singularity of education and the autonomy of art.**

### **Promised: A Butcher's Apron**

The drumming started in the cool of the evening, as if the dome of air were lightly hailed on. The drumming murmured from beneath the drum.

The drumming didn't murmur, rather hammered. Soundsmiths found a rhythm gradually. On the far bench of the hills tuns and ingots were being beaten thin.

The hills were a bellied sound-box resonating, a low dyke against diurnal roar, a tidal wave that stayed, that still might open.

Through red seas of July the Orange drummers led a chosen people through their dream. Dilations and engorgings, contrapuntal; slashers in shirt-sleeves, collared in the sunset, policemen flanking them like anthracite.

The air grew dark, cloud-barred, a butcher's apron. The night hushed like a white-mothed reach of water, miles downstream from the battle, a skein of blood still lazing in the channel ('July', in *Stations*, Heaney 1998, p. 84).

Here pedagogy confronts us by the harsh grit of its practice and definition. This reveals a third role for pedagogy—that of the *ágo* as an intransitive verb meaning 'to march, to move, to pass.' I choose to name the march as a pedagogic structure because it is no less different from the curricular march where the 'chosen' are led to a meeting place where performance and intention engage with knowledge as a tool that *informs* and *infatuates*. In this context information and infatuation move away from a personalised relationship between mortality

and memory. As a third role of pedagogy the march pertains to a meeting-place by which we come to assert where we belong. In this respect, learning, performance and intention come to terms with belonging as a ground of citizenship where personal identity is defined by *the many*.

In the third role of pedagogy, performance and intention face up to the *polis*, the city that gives us our methods of governance. In this respect, pedagogy also stands for a polity that is prone to the myth of a 'chosen' group whose job is to frame learning in a system of education with a specific objective: *citizenhood*. This starts to suggest education as an anomalous construct where belonging as an inclusion of identity is also an exclusion of those who are 'not chosen'. While in the avenues that run between information and infatuation, learning was allowed to negotiate fact and dream, it is not the case in the third moment of pedagogy. Here learning stumbles into a number of constraints. It has to face up to the responsibility of what could only be defined as a political struggle. In this state of affairs, negotiation is not a given, and more often than not, Agnes is no more because the radio and its drift between sleep and wakefulness are shattered by the drumming call to blind certainty.

In its third role, pedagogy takes two instances: the moment of the School, which then becomes the moment of the March. In the first instance *citizenhood* (rather than *citizenship*) is an edifice where rights are set within a history of monoliths carved after phraseologies of 'achievement,' 'standards,' and 'economic viability.' This instance of educational citizenhood is no less a praxis of citizenship than a community of subjects willed to the monoliths of a political history that has hammered down the will to freedom into a certain rhythm, which Heaney tells us, beats ingots thin.

## Learning as Dispute

Pedagogy presumes its ground as that of *agôn*.<sup>7</sup> *Agôn* is a meeting-place (a form of inclusion) that brings together a number of actions pertaining to dispute (a form of exclusion) in terms of legality, struggle and (perhaps more importantly) argument.<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note how the *agôn*, as a ground for argument and dispute, becomes a sign of education where another practice—that of the *curriculum*—recalls an arena of contest.<sup>9</sup> As a derivative of *curro*—a race—the word *curriculum* highlights the central polity of citizenship.

The marcher and the learner are the same individual who participates in the polity's edifice. This edifice highlights another side of education—that of the School, where the universality of knowledge is often measured against ideologies of merit rather than opportunity. I hasten to say that this reality is not something to be dismissed as some form of hegemony bequeathed by an established social class as a result of some political conspiracy. If the critique of education were to be limited to views of this kind, it would result in the same subjectivist assumptions by which learner-centred education became a surrogate of other ideological forms where a distorted, patronising view of opportunity wiped off any notion of merit. Merit and opportunity have to be alternate parts, and to that effect the anomalous reality of the third role of pedagogy must be seen in its legitimate contexts *where* and *how* citizens belong.

Citizens that belong have rights for themselves, as well as duties to other citizens, as well as non-citizens. This is where the Lego blocks of language—and of learning—are also

contingent to the perusal of their effects. In the moment of citizenship intention and performance are accountable to answer why immortality is an accident of a manufactured universe. In the pedagogical construct of citizenship, Kundera's dream is substituted by Heaney's nightmare, while Socrates and the Sheikh are visited by the grammar of finitude, where logic and memory are forced to abdicate from their immortal solace. Now learning dances with the method of drumming to a contrapuntal rhythm by which we construct our right to negotiate our everyday life in the knowledge that this is not as straight forward as we have been led to believe. Here the dialects of unlearning, by which citizens and non-citizens seek to belong beyond the claims of exclusive citizenship, find themselves confronted by the grammars of learning that promise citizenship to those who want to be included by excluding others.<sup>10</sup>

### **Passwords and Verbs**

Back to the prospect of death, we know that like the quest for happiness, mortal finitude constantly reinvents the journey of life and its ever-changing end-objective (*telos*). But as an object of pedagogy, mortality is inversely constructed—as the *avoidance* of an end. Happiness reflects an ethics of avoidance where the construction of everyday life seeks the continuous avoidance of sorrow. The avoidance of sorrow reflects an understanding of being where possibility is not simply found or recognised—but continuously constructed.

Drumming the way for a 'chosen' people also means the drumming away of the accidental situation that originally prompted the justification of aggression as a form of protection; arrogance as an attitude of philanthropy; oppression as a justification of democracy. On this



dialectical ground we could assert our opposite world-outlooks as uttered in their diverse dialects. Like education, this dialectic has to balance performance and intention with the duties and rights of belonging. Education is not simply right or righteous. It emerges from the dispute between dialects and grammatical outlooks. The apparent righteousness by which education has been assumed as a *received* and easily *apprehended* universality, is shown to be fallacious when one takes a closer look at the ethical and ontological spaces where individuals locate their notions of possibility. Whether possibility takes the form of power, happiness, knowledge, allegiance, or any other teleological project, it remains an object of dispute, and to that effect it is never given by some divine right or teleological certainty.

What beats ingots thin is not the violent and fearsome rhythm of the drummers, but their joyful ascendancy to a promise of happiness (without reminding us of the ethics of avoidance). This dilemma is characterised by Heaney's *Stations* where the harsh imperatives of belonging present us with a picture of happiness (as eudaimonic fulfilment), and where the marcher's certainty is invested in the butcher's apron. Far from a poetic turn of phrase, this depicts the inherent contradictions of belonging. In Heaney's example, we have the harsh demarcation of belonging which, in Northern Ireland, is more than an externalised political dispute.

Before the advent of unlearning (that was inaugurated by the 1994 Peace Process) enabled Republicans and Unionists to govern together a devolved Ulster, the learner-marcher had to wander in and out of the edifices of belonging. To the learner-marcher, belonging is externalised (by its periphery—figured as a wall), but at the same time it is internalised (by its

enclosed spaces—illustrated by the analogy of the cloister). This is where the learner achieves the skills of the word, uttered in the form of passwords:

I lodged with ‘the enemies of Ulster’, the scullions outside the walls. An adept at banter, I crossed the lines with carefully enunciated passwords, manned every speech with checkpoints and reported back to nobody (‘England’s Difficulty’, in Heaney 1998, p. 85).

The word is also written in verbs:

In the study hall my hand was cold as a scribe’s in winter. The supervisor rustled past, sibilant, vapouring into his breviary, his welterd brogues unexpectedly secular under the soutaine. Now I bisected the line AB, now found my foothold in a main verb in Livy. From my dormer after lights out I revisited the constellations and in the mourning broke the ice on an enamelled water-jug with exhilarated self-regard (‘Cloistered’, in Heaney 1998, p. 89).

The borders of the agôn could never forestall the anomalies of belonging. In the same way, the agôn cannot turn the harsh reality of human dispute into a utopian vision of innate goodness or unforced freedom. As a third role of pedagogy, citizenship (away from the School’s monolithic citizenship) proves that intention and performance are not restricted to closed and certain parameters. In Heaney’s image of the polity we are alerted to education’s anomalous nature—where learning is a moment of citizenship and unlearning begins to inaugurate that of citizenship. The learner-marchers may well form part of the serene teleology of Ulster’s fundamentalist individualism. Likewise, they could be the rightful

recipients of the Cloister's scholastic theocracy. But ultimately, the choices that are given to the learner-marchers inform the performance and intentions by which they are spared from regretting their being born into the very burgh by which they claim citizenship.

By passwords and verbs, the learner-marcher adopts the three roles of pedagogy as forms of life where one can imagine the positivist at dawn becoming the marcher at dusk, and where the scribe at Matins is a pagan at Compline. Here, the student of Livy becomes a mixture of a Protestant Orangeman and a Catholic Republican, whose secret life as a scribe vows a peculiar loyalty to the majesty of the inclusive-yet-exclusive walls, where Pope and Monarch are equal symbols of an outlook in constant struggle. These anomalies cannot be spared. Neither are they gratuitous.

## ART'S PED(AGO)GIES

### Part 2. ART IS NOT EDUCATION

Hegel (1975, p. 9) confirms how “the work of art brings before us the eternal powers that govern history without [the] appendage of the immediate sensuous present and its unstable appearance.” The case he makes for it is real inasmuch as this reality reflects and constructs a dialectical logic that augurs a degree of hope, over and beyond the contingency by which human beings do art, in its historical recognition of their limitations. Unless this is seen from the historicity by which art helps us articulate our plural contexts, the following will remain a case of metaphysical verbiage: “The hard shell of nature and the ordinary world make it more difficult for the spirit to penetrate through them to the Idea, than works of art do.” (Hegel 1975, p. 9) Yet far from being simply an idealist, Hegel here values art beyond any other human action. Marcuse further attests this when he states that, “in various forms of mask and silence, the artistic universe is organized by the images of a life without fear—in mask and silence because art is without power to bring about this life, and even without power to represent it adequately.” As a good student of Hegel, Marcuse knows that the reality by which we make art, is far more potent than the limitations by which we delineate philosophy or its linguistic limitations: “The more blatantly irrational the society becomes, the greater the rationality of the artistic universe.” (Marcuse 2002, p. 243)

**VI. As art's autonomy reveals its paradoxical nature, the fallacy of *education as a system of coherent necessities* is confirmed. Rather than invalidating education, this restores its singularity. Education cannot be gambled within the interstices of learning and unlearning. If, on the other hand, we were to regard education as that which counters the normalisation and desublimation of the world, then what emerges from the interstices of learning and unlearning is yet to be defined.**

Like any teleological projection, education is countered by a number of what appear to be anomalies. This becomes acute in the relationship between art and education. In this relationship—with art as a form of unlearning—education oscillates in and out of a self-reflective process where it comes to the conclusion that it has none but one certainty: that art pedagogy is essentially a paradox.

Here I suggest that we take a closer look at art and how *it* speaks *about* (and *to*) the world. To do this effectively, we need to trace several arguments that emerge from aesthetics while following art's take, particularly in its distinction from those grounds where aesthetics would invariably be played. Just as art and education remain distinct, philosophy—being that by which we *do* aesthetics—should retain its own immanent autonomy.

In aesthetics, we come to terms with a state of affairs where the *grounds* of education are rendered irrelevant by an anomalous relationship between art as an autonomous construct and education as a formative device. This philosophical intervention continues to facilitate the approach where education as a *device* is seen for what it is in its instrumentality. At the same time, a philosophical approach allows us to make reference to the (often prevalent) idea of

education as a teleological project, where formation is framed between an assumed point of departure or origin (*arkhé*), and a projected end (*telos*). Rather than turning philosophy into a mediational tool between art and education, here we have an opportunity to begin to map the convivial ways by which an argument for art would not exclude an argument for education, while at the same time dismiss the argument that one should beget the other as if these human activities must be coextensive.

In this second part of this chapter, I am proposing that we get to the heart of this state of affairs by (a), establishing whether the relationship between art and education in effect portends a necessary anomaly, and (b), showing that the only way education and art could be effective as autonomous states of affairs would be for them to act in recognition of this anomaly, while being regarded as separate domains.

Philosophy has taught us that *contingency* is not an arbitrary game. The accidental is not (as common parlance would put it) a particular state of affairs left to the mercy of chance. As necessity's *other*, the accidental pertains to particularity. By particularity we also imply a singular set of events that have a bearing on the ways by which we universalise our experience of the world, and how we justify and explain it.

In line with how, in the first part of this chapter, we examined the fallacy of the subject-object divide. It is worth reiterating that what we tend to *explain* is not a mutually exclusive relation between an objective world and how we subjectively experience it. If explanations are meant to exhaust our questions about the world, then they must include subjective worlds and objective experiences, as well as the definition of the world as a form of experience that

by itself and *protentively* (Schutz 1970, p. 137) purports an objective reality through forms of subjective perception.

If by art pedagogy's conscious recognition of paradox we come to reject the fallacy of education as a system of coherent necessities, and thereby assert education's singularity, then human responsibility would hold even higher stakes in terms of the decisions that society must take about education. I would argue that if educational discourses and their practices were to recognise and legitimise paradox, then arguments for education's autonomy would be even stronger than in the case of a system of education that is universally assumed as a schooled necessity.

By a conscious recognition of paradox, we mean that learning is recognised on the grounds of individual responsibility. As an individual concern, the particular is an object of a subject that is *conscious* of the world. While classical definitions of consciousness have often implied the need to act and change the world, what is here meant by consciousness has nothing to do with an assumed guarantee of progress or some illuminated path to absolute truth. *Consciousness is aligned to the responsibility by which we presume an intentional relationship with the world as a polis that is conscious of its agonistic limitations.* As the world is an objective reality that includes us as individuals amongst the rest of humankind, the consciousness that makes us aware of this world is founded on the myriad contradictions that make this world, as expressed by the contingencies and interpretations that we have.

I hasten to add that this does not mean that reality 'includes us' as if the *real* was an external being that moves us around at its own will. Rather, *we* continuously include reality in the overall construction of how *we* (as the human species) *see* ourselves as an integral part of

an objective universe. Yet as we are here speaking about art, how we see ourselves in this reality takes an interesting turn.

Now if Marcuse (2002, p. 75) is right when he states that “artistic alienation is sublimation,” and that this “creates the images of conditions which are irreconcilable with the established Reality Principle but which, as cultural images, become tolerable, even edifying and useful,” then here we have yet another confirmation that art is a way of engaging the world by paradox and aporia. Yet, Marcuse also adds that “this imagery is invalidated” because the paradox was disentangled and normalized within a dialectic that renounced itself through permanent synthesis, and thereby a condition of *one dimensionality*. The incorporation of artistic alienation “into the kitchen, the office, the shop; its commercial release for business and fun is, in a sense, desublimation—replacing mediated by immediate gratification.” Marcuse explains that, “it is desublimation practiced from a ‘position of strength’ on the part of society, which can afford to grant more than before because its interests have become the innermost drives of its citizens, and because the joys which it grants promote social cohesion and contentment.” (Marcuse 2002, p. 75)

So does this mean that all is lost and the world is doomed to eternal one-dimensionality? Is art that weak that it can’t sublimate anymore? Again, depending on how one reads Marcuse, the context is marked by unresolved contradictions: “The Pleasure Principle absorbs the Reality Principle; sexuality is liberated (or rather liberalized) in socially constructive forms.” (Marcuse 2002, p. 75) Later he adds that, “It appears that such repressive desublimation is indeed operative in the sexual sphere, and here, as in the desublimation of higher culture, it



operates as the by-product of the social controls of technological reality, *which extend liberty while intensifying domination.*” (Marcuse 2002, p. 76 emphasis added)

The scenario being presented by Marcuse also needs to be read against what he says later on where here states that, “the powerless, illusory truth of art (which has never been more powerless and more illusory than today, when it has become an omnipresent ingredient of the administered society) testifies to the validity of its images. The more blatantly irrational the society becomes, the greater the rationality of the artistic universe.” (Marcuse 2002, p. 243). Rather than some kind of reprieve, this recalls what, in the first part of this chapter, is identified as the third role for pedagogy, denoting the stage that moves on from the agonistic condition of dispute to that of marching, moving and passing. Thus while the first role of pedagogy denotes performance and intention as it engages with an ontology of *information*, this is confronted by a pedagogy of *infatuation*, where as discussed with Kundera’s art in mind, learning begins to be replaced by a pursuit of what is here distinctly identified by the absorption of the Reality Principle by the Pleasure Principle.

From the position of art’s engagement with education, this state of affairs begins to show that the model of learning as growth, understood from the argument of development and creativity, is made redundant. It seems that the need to sublimate becomes akin to that of intentionality by which mere experience is deemed *erratic*. To take this on board would also imply that we do not simply stake education within the interstices of learning and unlearning. This would not only become insufficient, but would pose a limit to the context where, as Marcuse put it, liberty is extended within an intensification of domination.

It seems to me, if we have to sustain the argument for consciousness as being akin to moments of liberation, then any central pedagogical character of consciousness to speak of must be made evident by an outright *refusal* of education as a teleological project. If, on the other hand, we were to regard education as that which counters the normalisation and desublimation of the world, then what emerges from the interstices of learning and unlearning is yet to be defined. For sure, what we must define is not whether we should sustain the notion of learning as a process of education—within or outwith the school—but where we begin when we speak of the urgency by which we could exit the one-dimensional conditions that have imprisoned us in the four walls of the polis. Thus while it is evident that to eliminate paradox is to eliminate the case for learning, the case for learning itself risks becoming redundant by its inability to confront repressive desublimation.

**VII. If art were a tool of mediation, it would be a mere semblance of freedom, thereby losing the ability to claim autonomy. When we speak of art's autonomy we also mean that there is no such thing as a *return* to a unitary origin, or a *fulfilment* of a preordained end. Rather, art *emerges* and *approaches* the world as a *dialectical* state of affairs where firstly, as a making, it remains anomalous of a universal or foundational principle, and secondly it rejects anything that appears to be given *a priori* in its form or content.**

**Pinter and Hegel**

LENNY (...) Come on, be frank. What do you make of all this business of being and not-being?

TEDDY What do you make of it?

LENNY Well, for instance, take a table. Philosophically speaking. What is it?

TEDDY A table.

LENNY Ah. You meant it's nothing else but a table. Well, some people would envy your certainty, wouldn't they Joey? For instance, I've got a couple of friends of mine, we often sit round the Ritz Bar having a few liqueurs, and they're always saying things like that, you know, things like: Take a table, take it. All right, I say, *take* it, *take* a table, but once you've taken it, what you going to do with it? Once you've got hold of it, where you going to take it?

MAX You'd probably sell it.

LENNY You wouldn't get much for it.

JOEY Chop it for firewood.

*(Lenny looks at him and laughs)*

— Harold Pinter (1999), *The Homecoming*, Act II, pp. 83-84.

Where art breaches philosophy, freedom and truth are relayed to other manners, some of which might move into morality wearing the mask of deception, while others are distracted by elusion under the pretext of desire. Yet questions remain. What is bequeathed by philosophy in this case? Is this art's offering, which goes further than what philosophy could

no longer bequeath? In Pinter, a dialogue about a table and legs has a way of becoming intimate, and begins to articulate a world of desire, as it manoeuvres itself into the sphere of manipulation, and a multiplicity of meanings intent to distract, but also to amplify the possibilities by which we present ourselves to each other as bodies with expression.

RUTH: Don't be too sure though. You've forgotten something. Look at me. I ...

move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear ... underwear ... which moves with me ... it ... captures your attention. Perhaps you misinterpret. The action is simple. It's a leg ... moving. My lips move. Why don't you restrict ... your observations to that? Perhaps the fact that they move is more significant ... than the words which come through them. You must bear that ... possibility ... in mind. (*Silence*) (Pinter 1999, Act II, pp. 83-84)

While one could dismiss this dialogue as a sardonic commentary on a degenerated conversation by which people feel comfortable to speak at cross purposes in order to hint what one may or may not intend to say, the point here is that speaking at cross purposes implies a specific function of power. In this relationship, power emerges from the sheer relatedness of one person with another. Somehow, when one or two meet in anyone's name, there is a power relation that is slowly negotiated. Yet, in situations like these, there may be other implications, such as avoiding the question, or indeed detracting from having a conversation. If, as in this case, the excuse is that of being, then here we are not simply avoiding philosophy by posing a question of desire. Rather we are taking a philosophical question of being into the realms of desire because that is, ultimately, where it should be. In

this way, the discussion is extended into a further field that appears to be unlinked, yet which has a sense of purpose in that it insist on being purposeless.

In Pinter, the dispassionate purpose of philosophy may have been botched. This recalls the issues that Socrates had with opinion, and the deviation from an argument constructed on logical grounds. However, in Pinter's case the dialogue does not go unlearned or dutifully forgotten as in the case of Mahfouz's Sheikh, who seems to care no more for grammar. The way this discussion evolves invites us to move between boundaries. In this case they are boundaries set between philosophy (via the question of being) and art (as something akin to the realm of desire qua sublimation). The reason for moving out of the realms of logic, grammar, learning or unlearning pertains to the fact that ultimately Pinter is an artist, and his work is following the opportunities that we take from making art, and by which we aim to alienate the real from its factual immediacy. Whether art falls squarely within the realms of desire is another question. However, there is always the temptation to argue that if art could easily manoeuvre itself within the realm of desire, then this carries us into the realms of aesthetics, where several educators would argue, there is a case for *learning* to be made.

Whether it is legitimate or not to bring 'back' art into learning or unlearning would pertain to a *nostalgic* question. By this I mean that somehow art is often regarded as a form of return, a homecoming, indeed a nostalgic affair. To that effect, nostalgia is not simply a yearning for a memory, but a powerful move 'back' to a presumed origin. In this respect art is assumed as a form of transportation that carries back what has become unlikely to ever be able to return.

This desired assumption of a return is a fallacy. If anything, when art is prompted to articulate a sense of belonging, the outcomes clearly take an inverse direction where the

return is made into a future, projecting the manufactured assumptions of what a homecoming could be or is desired to become. More so, this subverts the very notion of a reversed teleology by which some would want to believe that one could retrace one's being into a past. That is at best articulated as a mirage into a presumed future that will never happen. In this respect, a homecoming in art remains avant-nostalgic in that it speculates on what-is-yet-to-come through a constructed mirror of what-might-have-been.<sup>11</sup>

Through this mechanism, many have built a case on art which not only forecloses a return, but which reinforces the anomalous nature by which desire in art is aesthetically posed and pedagogically assumed. The false yearning of a return by which Odysseus partook of his ordeal in a journey that left him with nothing, is instilled in us by the same sense of moral fatalism, by which we have taken religious figures and built entire institutions around them. As we continue to accede to such constructs, we struggle to make a case for art as homecoming, as indeed we make of art education a case for redemption when in effect we know that there is no such thing as a return to one's origin. If there is such a scenario as the promised land, then this must be stolen and taken away from those who are living there. For good reason, we invariably find that the results are not only problematic, but simply anathema—as indeed Pinter shows in this very work.

Thus before anyone breaks into song and begin to wax lyrical on the virtues of aesthetic education as a form of return to the idea and understanding of being, to begin to make a case for aesthetic education one must take a very different route into an *aesthetic* narrative, which is underpinned by the impossibilities that prompt it.

The question thereby remains: would chopping a table for firewood ultimately articulate the sense of being by which we approach it, legs and all? The question is as comical as it is deceptive, in that it may well remain immoral to some and pleasant to others. As an artist, Pinter's aim is to cast doubt on anything one could imagine. He has no answers because that would turn his work of art into a manual of instruction with answers and methods that one presumes to follow and understand. The philosophical trope of the table appears innocent enough until one starts speaking of underwear; until the suggestive language becomes desirable in what appears intimate yet even vulgar. The prudish would move away and find nothing aesthetical about suggestions like these. Yet the point is made from an equally aesthetic position. After all, desire is at the centre of the aesthetic value by which art gains its own specificity. What is anomalous is the projection of learning on it, as if it is meant to convey meaning or moral instruction against all odds.

### **Art's Logic of Emergence**

Hegel argues that art reveals an interaction between freedom, truth and universality. In art, universality is actualised as freedom. Art "is the freedom of intellectual reflection which rescues itself from the *here* and now, called sensuous reality and finitude." (Hegel 1975, p. 8) In this respect, art mediates freedom with truth. But if we stop there, art remains instrumental, and by consequence what freedom it may reveal to us will remain limited. If we are satisfied with art as an instrument of mediation, art remains a semblance of freedom, but in effect it will be heteronomous, where it would simulate a virtual truth, and where it remains dependent on external need that subject it to mediate, without the ability to claim autonomy.

For art to emerge within what Hegel calls the Spirit—which even for us living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would still denote a historical state of affairs by which human beings could lay claim to be true to their world—art cannot be reduced to an instrument.

To sustain its autonomy art has to *emerge in* (and therefore *approach*) the world as a *dialectical* state of affairs. Art is dialectical in the sense that it mediates by negating an exclusivist notion of truth so it could expose the untrue. On its presumption of universality, art operates within the parameters of historical contingency, and thereby relates to the realms of the particular. It is free because its appearance within the Spirit happens by means of the sensuous unworthiness of matter. In the first place art is a making, and to that material effect it remains anomalous of the Spirit.

Hegel never attends to the anomalous in art in this way. His approach to it as a making is always enhanced by the assumption that it would sublate its material and contingent limitations. Hegel's mechanisms of negation are not equivalent to anomaly. Hegel's dialectic is animated by the desire to reach a resolution, a judgemental notion that is never "deferred to infinity," as he would say of Kant's noumenal wildcard. Even when the logic of the dialectic is assumed within concrete and historical conflicts that could be identified with forms of negation, Hegel holds fast to a mechanism by which conflict is elevated into a state of affairs that ultimately contains negation within rational assumptions.

So in constructing his defence for art, Hegel adds that in terms of the unease by which art's mediation is seen as less worthy, and in terms of "the *element* of art in general, namely its pure appearance and *deceptions*," such unworthiness would hold only "if pure appearance could be claimed as something wrong." "But," he argues, "appearance itself is essential to



essence. Truth would not be truth if it did not show itself and appear, if it were not truth *for* someone and *for* itself, as well as for the spirit in general too.” This resolves the initial argument for art as actuality where “only beyond the immediacy of feeling and external objects is genuine actuality to be found.” (Hegel 1975, p. 8)

Hegel’s case for art is that it mediates between the immediacy of the particular and the permanence of the universal. However, this is neither straight forward, nor does it presume some teleological form of ascendancy. Art’s emergence is not identitarian in form, nor does it strive to prove or sustain anything a priori in its content. Though Hegel remains an idealist, and to that extent his logic is based on presumed outcomes rather than causal chains, his process retains a high degree of speculation. This means that although history throws at us a degree of uncertainty in terms of the outcomes that emerge from their historic contingencies, ultimately with art being a human activity, it seeks to move beyond the circumstantial limitations that mark its origin.

In Hegelian terms, to state that art’s dialectical logic remains speculative means that while the first argument for art is that of beauty, which in nature is excluded from scientific precision, in art this limitation must be taken into consideration if it is to compensate by way of its mediation. As it is human (rather than natural), art signifies beauty by making it specific, and thus raises its stakes above nature. For Hegel, beauty in art stands above nature because it is born of the Spirit (1975, p. 1). He argues that formally every human notion, even a useless one, is “higher than any product of nature, *because in such a notion spirituality and freedom are always present.*” (1975, p. 2, emphasis added) The spiritual is self-conscious and intelligent where freedom is true to itself. We must keep in mind that this state of affairs

emerges within human consciousness and human freedom. Spirit belongs to human spirituality, which is freedom and intelligence. Hegel's philosophy never leaves this earth: "taken by itself, a natural existent like the sun, is indifferent, not free and self-conscious in itself." (1975, p. 2) In other words the sun is neither intelligent nor free, but humans are. Spirit denotes the free and the intelligent absolute of the human world.

By the same argument, art's universality cannot be real unless it transpires from the makings of particularity and individuality. Hegel's logic is triangulated. Art as a human making is free and intelligent, and its logic is signified by aesthetics, "the spacious realm of the beautiful" whose province is art. (1975, p.1) So the story goes that "art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world, and gives them a higher actuality, born of the spirit." (Hegel, 1975, p. 9)

What makes this a logical possibility is not the speculative nature of the Idea—as the aspiration towards free and intelligent reality, constructed, as it were, on the assumptions of a salutary dialectic by which the Spirit expands and realizes itself. Ultimately the Hegelian aspiration is borne out of the Enlightenment's desire to reconcile philosophy with science. Accordingly, Hegel's philosophy holds an aspiration for political coherence. To this effect, he wagers logical possibility on a more 'tangible' terrain—that of individuality, where the problem of mediation as subservient to the true and the universal is re-claimed as a self-subsisting ground where reflection becomes a mechanism of mutual otherness.

Within the polity of a dialectical logic like Hegel's, individuality stands for "the reflection-into-self of the specific characters of universality and particularity." This unity is a "negative self-unity" that holds "complete and original determinateness, without any loss to its self-

identity or universality.” (Hegel 1989 §163, p. 226) It is a given of any dialectical structure that it has to be a self-sustained structure, and individuality ultimately provides the means for a dialectical logic to function as such. But it is also a given of any dialectical structure that freedom and intelligence would subsist as forms of negation—in other words as a rupture, or dislocation, or indeed a violence by which any *elevation* or *sublation* of the particular to the universal would happen. This comes at a price. For negation to be subsistent of freedom and intelligence it cannot result in a mechanism of positive sameness, where antinomies are merely posited. This is where Kierkegaard, (and much later) Adorno, take exception to Hegel.

### **Impossible Imputation(s)**

Before we forget where we left with Pinter, it is worth recalling that then philosophy was never the handmaid of an artistic manual, nor was art expected to move within the travails of the philosophical. In this respect rather than a parting of ways, there remains a specificity by which art, even when endowed with such mediational powers given it by Hegel, it has the choice to refuse—indeed renounce—this claim, while it sustains its dialectical logic by dint of the autonomy which, in effect, Hegel and Pinter both give art. The distinction by which philosophical assumptions begin to partake of an artistic function is never denied to those philosophers who seek to find ways out of what they would regard as a *system*.

Unlike Marx’s claim that Hegel was standing on his head, Kierkegaard and Adorno’s exception to Hegel’s triangulated world is far more aggressive, and to an extent it is such because they seem to partake of art’s *gran rifiuto*, which in its original case—that of

Dante's—it presumed what was then considered to be the worst refusal that an anointed Vicar of Christ could do: abdicate from the throne of Peter.<sup>12</sup>

In their refutation, Adorno and Kierkegaard take on the dialectic, which in their minds should carry the speculative premise to the absolute consequence of negation rather than find a positive resolution in some external process such as the State or the Monarchy. In terms of art, this has even more drastic effects, as art's dialectical logic moves from being crucial to its mediational role to becoming critical in its assumption of its inherent paradox.

If art has to reveal freedom and truth by the mechanisms of a self-subsistent individuality, it would also warrant that individuality emerges as a non-identical self. Because Hegel cannot but take art's emergence into the realms of history (because it's aesthetic mission must always partakes of history through the emergence of the Spirit), art as a making must also hold individuality as a repository of the will where *to make* implies *the will to make*. After all, intelligence implies a will for self-consciousness, and a will to freedom is intelligent by means of the *dynamic* that moves potential towards the act. Hegel takes care of this dynamic by operating it as negation.

This leads us to the path where, with respect to the logic of negation for the self to subsist, its relationship with both form and essence becomes anomalous by necessity. This is because if, in its “deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit,” art comes to express the *Divine* by placing itself “in the same sphere as religion and philosophy,” then its outcome will be more akin to sin than to virtue. (Hegel 1975, p. 7) For art to reveal truth and freedom by the manner of individuality—where “negative self-unity has complete

and original determinateness, without any loss to its self-identity or universality” (Hegel 1975, p. 7)—it cannot avoid sin. Kierkegaard presents sin in the following quandary:

Sin is this: before God, *or with the conception of God*, to be *in despair at not willing to be oneself*, or *in despair at willing to be oneself*. Thus sin is potentiated weakness or potentiated defiance: sin is the potentiation of despair. The point upon which the emphasis rests is before God, or the fact that the conception of God is involved; the factor which dialectically, ethically, religiously, makes ‘qualified’ despair (to use a juridical term) synonymous with sin is the conception of God. (Kierkegaard 1974, p. 227)

To live with this quandary, seeking not to avoid sin (without necessarily seeking it), while refusing to be in despair (even when, ultimately sin equates itself with “the conception of God”), we need some *pragmatic* handles. Assuming that art is an intelligent action, one could argue that art signifies unity by ways of a voluntary and somewhat aggressive form of estrangement. Art negates itself as a universal language because of its speciality, but in being special it reflects *unto itself* other grammars that equally claim to be either (i) universal to the conventions of all species, or (ii) peculiar to the conventions of a defined genus, or (iii) both at the same time. In other words, the quandary of sin is ‘neatly’ avoided.

The Hegelian argument implies that art asserts itself as necessary. In line with the grammar of self-subsistence, art has to breach the here and now by self-reciprocation where the elevation of peculiar existence to universal reality is made possible. For Hegel, “pure self-reciprocation is (...) Necessity unveiled or realized.” (Hegel 1989. §157, p. 219) After Wittgenstein, we assume this as a tautological proposition. After Kant we would still identify

this state of affairs as antinomical, especially if we want to keep our focus on the necessary transgression of the dialectic. Likewise, we would contend with Lyotard (1988) that this state of affairs resides within the labyrinth of the *diffèrend*, as it seems difficult for it to impute itself for the breach of self-reciprocation when to do so art needs to negate itself as art—after which there will be nothing to impute. Again the avoidance of sin comes true by sidestepping it through the aporetic nature of both the argument and the sheer matter of an act being (qua *becoming*) art.

Yet for Hegel, necessity is one step in the ascendancy (the emergence) to the concreteness of the Notion. What mediates this ascendancy is Freedom as “the truth of necessity,” while in turn, the Notion as “the truth of substance” presents “an independence which, though self-repulsive into distinct independent elements, yet in that repulsion is self-identical, and in the movement of reciprocity still at home and conversant only with itself.” (Hegel 1989. §158, p. 220) In its concreteness the Notion subsumes everything else by necessity, and this is where Hegel’s measure of truth arises as tautology—at least as we now understand art in its particularity whereby its emergence is only understood and assumed through its historical contingency.

But Hegel sees no problem in this because the ultimate mediating moment would be an individuality that sits between contingency and necessity. This seems to operate as the grand mediator, the Notion, which “is concrete out and out: because the negative unity with itself, as characterization pure and entire, which is individuality, is just what constitutes its self-relation, its universality” (Hegel 1989. §158, p. 220) Yet Hegel sees in this an antinomy that has to be resolved. But he also concedes that “the functions or ‘moments’ of the notion are to

this extent indissoluble” while “the categories of ‘reflection’ are expected to be severally apprehended and separately accepted as current, apart from their opposites.” (Hegel 1989. §164, p. 228) As expected Hegel seeks to resolve the argument by triangulating identity, difference and ground: “Universality, particularity, and individuality are, taken in the abstract, the same as identity, difference, and ground. But the universal is self-identical, with express qualification, that it simultaneously contains the particular and the individual.” (Hegel, 1989 §164, pp. 228-9)

This indicates the limits of Hegel’s system, as a system whose ambition was to do away with any concept of limitation, let alone contingency. Somehow the crux of his triangulation remains a notion of individuality which, according to him, “must be understood to be a subject or substratum, which involves the genus and species in itself and possesses a substantial existence.” Here one finds no separation, but an “explicit or realized inseparability of the functions of the notion in their difference.” (Hegel, 1989 §164, pp. 228-9)

**VIII. We speak of art’s autonomy in its *emergence* because as we describe art we describe ourselves. As an attribute of life and art, colour is one of the cases by which we make the world. In turn, to speak of colour is to say something about the words by which we name the world. To name is to reveal a law. When women and men become artists, they confirm that art is a form of life, often described through the use of language-games. As descriptions and games imply a law, they emerge from negotiations between human beings. The law—whether negotiated in a language-game, or accepted as *given* prior to any experience—must not only appear and emerge from its acts of**

**mixing contexts and forms, but allows us to affirm the plural nature of individual definitions by which art engages with the world.**

If art is to reveal the interaction between freedom, truth and universality because of its power to penetrate into the “hard shell of nature and the ordinary world,” (Hegel 1975, p. 9) then it has two alternatives: (i) As an expression of individuality art could *enclose* the difference between the *dialects* of the particular and the *lingua franca* of the universal by *foreclosing* negation by means of itself—where the Notion’s triangulation of identity, difference, and ground is retained as equilateral; (ii) Alternatively, art recognizes *dialect* and *lingua franca* on the first level (which did not satisfy Hegel), where identity, difference, and ground are “severally apprehended and separately accepted as current.” (Hegel 1989. §164, p. 228) This condition will approximate what Lyotard terms as the *diffèrend*, which is “a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments.” (Lyotard 1988, p. xi)

In this respect we need to look at art from *outside*, from those externalities that are attributed to art, as they appear to belong to art. Here I have in mind two major attributes by which we approach art from outside. The first is *colour*, as assumed in its physical and phenomenological definitions. The second is the *name* by which we assume art to have an inherent law, and to which it is often held to account particularly when art is regarded, as in this chapter, as being autonomous in import, relation and modality.

**Yellow, Blue, and God**



Considered in a general point of view, colour is determined towards one of two sides. It thus presents a contrast which we call a polarity, and which we may fitly designate by the expressions *plus* and *minus*.

<i>Plus</i>	<i>Minus</i>
Yellow.	Blue.
Action.	Negation.
Light.	Shadow.
Brightness.	Darkness.
Force.	Weakness.
Warmth.	Coldness.
Proximity.	Distance.
Repulsion.	Attraction.
Affinity with acids.	Affinity with alkalis

— Johann Wolfgang Goethe, (1987, §696, p. 276), *Theory of Colours*.

Goethe's world of colours is that of an optimist. It nurtures freedom and hope. It is a world of promise. It pursues an idea of totality only to value and enhance the plurality of detail. It upholds minute observable detail, yet it never becomes fragmentary. Goethe's *Theory of Colours* has its origin in the disposition of a man of method and science. Given Newton's scientific explanations, there is no doubt that Goethe gets the science of colour wrong.

However his mistakes are neither false nor deceitful. Though his conclusions are scientifically wrong his conviction that men and women are the first measure of scientific truth retains solid veracity. In Goethe's world, theory is primarily human. For him, the exact sciences come second to the exactness of human measure—which leaves to conclude that his take on colour is markedly phenomenological.

Goethe places no limits on his intent to enlighten human reason by its possibilities. He makes no compromise even when it becomes clear that the scientific truth of colour was in Newton's gift, not his. As Wittgenstein (1990) put it, Goethe's theory "has not proved to be an unsatisfactory theory, rather it really isn't a theory at all. Nothing can be predicted with it." (I, §70, p. 11) Somehow, the feeling is that his project is a conceptual process with which human perception comes to terms with being as a whole. Goethe's language speaks to the whole person and avoids essentialism. His narrative wishes for a special place where representation is considered a privilege of the human imaginary. As he put it to Zelter, by making use of its sound senses the human *per se* is "the finest and most exact physical tool" that one could find. Conceding that there are limits and that "there is a lot that cannot be measured" and which cannot be determined by experimentation, Goethe argues that human beings hold a higher position than any experiment or measure. "In all its mechanical subdivisions," Goethe tells Zelter, "what is a string to the musician's ear? Indeed, one could ask: what are all of nature's elementary phenomena with respect to man who has to chain and modify them in order to assimilate them?" (Goethe, cited in Lukács 1971, pp. 130-131)

Music is not calculable by the perfection of an electronic tuner or a metronome's accuracy. Even when pitch and rhythm are essential to music, an assumption made on the grounds of

their measure will not tell us much about the performance of a Brahms, let alone a Stockhausen. What Goethe considers as paramount is not the external precision of a tuner or metronome, but the aesthetic comprehension of music as a human form of being. Likewise, colour is a concept of being, not a natural element handed down to us by prismatic calculation.

Wittgenstein argues that, “Someone who agrees with Goethe believes that Goethe correctly recognized the *nature* of colour. And nature here is not what results from experiments, but it lies in the concept of colour.” (Wittgenstein 1990, I §71, p. 12) Like sound and the musician, colour and human beings operate on the development of concepts by which the case of the world—which constitutes the facts of human life and history—are lived and understood. At least that is Goethe’s implication when he goes at length to draw out the pedagogical implications of colour in their moral and philosophical associations.

When the distinction of yellow and blue is duly comprehended, and especially the augmentation into red, by means of which the opposite qualities tend towards each other and become united in a third; then, certainly, an especially mysterious interpretation will suggest itself, since a spiritual meaning may be connected with these facts; and when we find two separate principles producing green on the one hand and red in their intenser state, we can hardly refrain from thinking in the first case on the earthly, in the last on the heavenly, generation of the Elohim (Goethe 1987, §919, p. 352).

Yellow and Blue, in their mutual saturation, augment to red to complete the triad of primary colours. This is a simple mutual relationship where yellow and blue’s respective

addition and subtraction complement action with negation, light with shadow, proximity with distance, repulsion with attraction ... and so on. It is a basic notion, similar to the principles by which God was fashioned in the Judeo-Christian universe. Order and disorder become Elohim in their mutual relationship.

In Goethe the notion of the Universe's chromatic harmony has some lasting roles to play. Though similar to Dionysius the Aeropagite's quest for the harmony of the universe (and God)<sup>13</sup>, Goethe goes beyond some poetic formula. Goethe's science is authentic in that it appreciates a universe where the complementary behaviour of colour rests deep within the mechanism of the signs and symbols by which human beings have developed a language of colour. Wittgenstein takes Goethe's opposition to the mathematical exteriorisation of colour beyond humanist poetics and back into the realms of language's *logic of the possible* as distanced from the presumed certainties of the *logic of the case*.<sup>14</sup>

One thing is irrefutably clear to Goethe: no lightness can come out of darkness—just as more and more shadows do not produce light. — This could be expressed as follows: we may call lilac a reddish-whitish-blue or brown a blackish-reddish-yellow — but we *cannot* call a white a yellowish-reddish-greenish-blue, or the like. And *that* is something that experiments with the spectrum neither confirm nor refute. It would, however, also be wrong to say, 'Just look at the colours in nature and you will see that it is so'. For looking does not teach us anything about the concepts of colours (Wittgenstein 1990, I §73, p. 12).

In *Goethe and The Scientific Tradition*, Nisbet (1972, p. 74) argues that "it is futile to clamour for the reinstatement of ideas which have been conclusively refuted by subsequent

research, and many of which (...) were not in any case original to Goethe.” As Wittgenstein puts it, “a construct may in turn teach us something about the way we in fact use the *word*.” (1990, I §4, p. 2, added emphasis) Just as the construct of a theory of colour has a lot to say about words, (and how we verbalise our perceptions), in reading Goethe’s observation (in parallel to Wittgenstein’s remarks) one has something to say about the *word* itself. In saying something about the word per se, we also have something to say about the word as a *name* by presuming a wider context for a *law*.

## To Mix

Note Wittgenstein’s parenthesis after the word ‘mixing’ in the following:

People might have the concept of intermediary colours or mixed colours even if they never produced colours by mixing (*in whatever sense*). Their language-games might only have to do with looking for or selecting already existing intermediary or blended colours (Wittgenstein 1990, I §8, p. 3 emphasis added).

The phrase “in whatever sense” brings up the question “In what sense?” This question might begin to explain why the philosopher puts *sense* in parenthesis. Sense is implied in its plurality, i.e. as a number of *senses*. Sense also implies intention. “In whatever sense” may also mean “whatever the intention of *mixing* may be” or “whatever the act of *mixing* may mean to *us*.”

In trying to find a meaning for *sense*, one finds that “in whatever sense” could imply a number of meanings: (a) mixing as an act; *fusion*; (b) mixing as action; with a brush or

spatula on a palette; or with a stick in a pot; (c) mixing (as in *entangling*) the meanings of colours; (d) mixing as in *blending* one colour with another; (e) mixing as in *mix-up*, or *confusion*.

This raises a further question: How would *sense* explain intention and the act of mixing? Which brings us to the definition of our perception in terms of the words we use and in the same way art is verbalised in its various contexts—philosophical, aesthetic, pedagogical, or even political.

One objection could claim that this analytic approach adds nothing to the theory or the aesthetics of colour, and less so to our understanding of art. Wittgenstein defined the *nature* of colour in Goethe as “the *concept* of colour.” As a concept, colour is transformed from a category of science to a category of discourse as a narrative about language, its actions, its makings and the rules it sets for practise.

Elsewhere, Wittgenstein makes a distinction between *red* (or *blue*, or *yellow* ...) as a proper concept, and *colour* as a pseudo-concept. This follows the distinction he makes between “what is the case” and “what is possible.” “Grammar is not the expression of what is the case but of what is possible. There is a sense therefore in which possibility is logical form.” (Wittgenstein 1980 p. 10) He goes on to argue that, “there are no logical concepts, such for example as ‘thing,’ ‘complex’ or ‘number’. Such terms are expressions of logical forms, not concepts.” (ibid.) By drawing examples from colour further on, the distinction between logical forms and concepts becomes clearer:

‘Primary colour’ and ‘colour’ are pseudo-concepts. It is nonsense to say ‘Red is a colour’, and to say ‘There are four primary colours’ is the same as to say ‘There are red,

blue, green and yellow'. The pseudo-concept (colour) draws a boundary *of* language, the concept proper (red) draws a boundary *in* language. (Wittgenstein 1980, pp. 10-11.)

I would suggest that as logical form, the possibility of colour (as red, blue, yellow ... etc.) goes beyond the case by which 'colour' is externalised into a pseudo-concept. As a proper concept, the expression of what is possible is returned to grammar.<sup>15</sup> As an act of *mixing*, colour is regarded in the sense of this very important distinction between a proper concept, and a concept that may or may not inform colour per se. I would suggest that this distinction remains irrelevant outside the boundaries of philosophy, unless colour is recognized by a number of language-games. As a language-game, the mixing of colour implies a diversity of applications. Mixing colour becomes perception, as well as interaction, having concepts, seeing difference, and in turn defining the grammars of seeing. In defining the application of colour as a continuous negotiation of this diversity, a child who is mixing colour in school would not only mix hues for her picture, but would also construct a concept for life.

Like the child's mixing of paints, there is an artist who is mixing colour in her studio. But does the artist mix colour on the palette in the same way a decorator would mix colour in the pot? If the answer is in the affirmative then we must ask "How?" If the answer is "No" then one needs to establish "Why?" Science in Newtonian terms is unable to answer these questions. According to Wittgenstein, neither does Goethe's theory of colour would be able to do so because in speaking of the character of a colour one thinks "of just *one* particular way it is used." (Wittgenstein 1990, I §73, p. 12)

The individual nature of colour as a proper concept would have many answers. In establishing the role of colour, the act of mixing colour (in its various meanings) has to be

read in the *intentional* contexts of the construct and application of colour. Once intention becomes the convention for the concept of colour, a further question would arise: Does ‘mixing’ as a language-game imply the *subject* (i.e. the agency of *seeing* a colour) in the same ways Goethe argues with regards to the physiological aspect of colour? Here Goethe seems to have an answer: “We naturally place these [physiological] colours first, because they belong altogether, or in a great degree, to the subject—to the eye itself.” (Goethe 1987, §1)

### **To Appear**

In thinking “of just *one* particular way it is used” (Wittgenstein 1990, I §73, p. 12) the conventions behind the intention that we put to words in the sense by which we qualify the mixing of colour, must revisit this idea of the subject. If we do not consider how the eye (as the subject) *presents* us with a particular way we use colour, the notion of colour falls back on being an externalised pseudo-concept. Yet colour as a language game implies more than one subject. This is because when insisting (as in the particular case of mixing) that colour is a phenomenon—that is, an *appearance* that we tend to *see* from within—we have to account for the discussions raised by the subject-object.

We must ask further questions, such as: Does ‘mixing’ imply a social form of definition? Is ‘mixing’ a cultural language? Is ‘mixing’ an aesthetic judgement? Is ‘mixing’ political? Is ‘mixing’ scientific? Is ‘mixing’ an ethical phrase? (... and so on.) As a way of understanding these questions, I suggest that we consider two models of explanation: (i) Goethe’s reference



to what he calls the ur-phenomenon with respect to his theory of colour; and (ii) Wittgenstein's colour-blind tribe.

Nisbet (1972, p. 36) defines Goethe's ur-phenomenon as that "under which the quality common to all instances under investigation is revealed in an unusually striking fashion." In the *Theory of Colours*, Goethe defines ur-phenomena as "primordial phenomena, because nothing appreciable by the senses lies beyond them." However, Goethe argues that this gives ur-phenomena a vantage point in that "they are perfectly fit to be considered as a fixed point to which we first ascended, step by step, and from which we may, in like manner, descend to the commonest case of every-day experience." (Goethe 1987, §175, pp. 71-2)

Goethe's reference to ur-phenomena, as a possible approach to a subjective explanation of atmospheric colours, confirms his refusal to reduce his definition of colours to a particularity without context. In view of his method of analogical inquiry, one is not surprised to find how Goethe weaves the concept of colour as a particular form into a Leibnizian chain. In this methodology "observers of nature will carry such researches further, and accustom themselves to trace and explain the various appearances which present themselves in every-day experience on the same principle." (Goethe 1987, §173, p. 71) Note how the method pertains to *tracing* and *explaining* a number of appearances by which one would then ascertain how a chain of other appearances (phenomena) come together and inform our everyday experience. Goethe's aim is to explain the "most splendid instances of atmospheric appearances" in the vivid terms of the origin of this chain of appearances.

In its emergence into being and knowledge, the subject is the beholder of these appearances, as the eye is the beholder of colour. If we were to deduce a pedagogical

mechanism by which ur-phenomena would provide us with a ground for the gradual construction of knowledge, one could argue that this process of learning is entirely alien to a reductionist process of elimination or selection. Goethe's ur-phenomena highlight an entelecheic chain that moves from possibility towards its fulfilment. This process also recalls the Aristotelian distinction between passive imitation and active representation.

Ur-phenomena bring actuality to representation and by participating in (and thus empowering) the domains of the subject they mediate (and bring) potentiality to its fruition. In this way the subject moves away from beholding colour as a particular, and assumes it within a chain of phenomena that give colour individuality.

Turning to Wittgenstein's model of inquiry, one finds that intention *as* individuality moves intention by means of a universal convention, which has nothing to do with Goethe's phenomenal chain, even if in some ways it appears similar in its implications.

Imagine a *tribe* of colour-blind people, and there could easily be one. They would not have the same colour concepts as we do. For even assuming they speak, e.g. English, and thus have all the English colour words, they would still use them differently than we do and would *learn* their use differently.

Or if they have a foreign language, it would be difficult for us to translate their colour words into ours (Wittgenstein 1990, I §13, p. 4).

The colour-blind tribe begins to confirm that there is "no *commonly* accepted criterion for what is a colour, unless it is one of our colours." (Wittgenstein 1990, I §14, p. 4) This runs contrary to Goethe's method of analogy and brings this issue to a sharp edge, which brings

Wittgenstein to the now famous conclusion that “There is no such thing as phenomenology, but there are indeed phenomenological problems.” (1990, I §53, p. 9)

Then again, away from Goethe and Wittgenstein, the poet has a very different approach to such questions. George Seferis concludes his poem “Rocket” with a decision:

I can't live  
only with peacocks,  
nor travel always  
in the mermaid's eyes (Seferis 1981, p. 475).

Seferis's decision is sharp and categorical. The sense with which a mermaid's eyelids conceal “a thousand antennae” to “grope giddily” and “to find the sky” has another sense of mixing. In this case metaphor blends with reality, exactness becomes one with possibility, and the determined is confused with the *what-might-be*. Beyond Wittgenstein or Goethe's philosophical limits, Seferis's poetics yield to their own poetic instinct: like the mermaid's eyes, the colours of the peacock are sonorous and harmonious. They are possibilities of certainties. But they could never become hard fast possibilities because contrary to customary belief, poetry never nurtures nonsense.

## **Names**

His three [distinct] names are so particular to him. The first one (by which he was registered) is Guido di Pietro: affectionately called Guidolino. (Was this given to him because as a child he was small and rather frail? For similar reasons one of his religious

Fathers, the Dominican Pierozzi Antonio, became Antonino, and then Sant'Antonino).

He took his second name, Giovanni da Fiesole, when he entered the religious order: probably, with the known intention to honour another of his religious Fathers, the Dominican Giovanni Dominici; (...)

These two names belong to his [personal] history; but the third, Beato Angelico, was given to him, during and after his life-time, by his popular legend. It is no coincidence that it is by this name that he is familiar to the world.

— Elsa Morante (1970, p. 5), *Il beato propagandista del Paradiso* (Heaven's holy propagandist)

A common misconception about naming often assumes that names are given and received, but never assumed by those who are named. To name is to objectify what is being named. Elohim, Hashem or Yahweh is the name given to “He who is never named,” the God of the three Abrahamic faiths.<sup>16</sup> There is a negotiation between human will and theological definition in the process of naming a holy entity such as God. How could the creator's name—that is, define, let alone make—their Creator? Vico (1998) tells us that epistemologically this is impossible, as what we name or indeed define and know is what we make. Thus a name becomes a case if one assumes that it is normally received, but never presumed by whoever bears it.

Fra Angelico was an image-giver who used colour *ontologically*, by a way of *being*. As in ways of doing, in art ways of being hold no mysteries, especially when one takes on what is understood to be an artist. Being an artist implies the act of using colour as a form of life. To

say that colour is a form of life is to make a concrete statement as saying that art is a way of being. Colour is a form of life because for artists colour belongs to those ways to *doing* art. *Doing* art bears a heavier significance than making (as in *manufacturing*) art. Fra Angelico was an artist because his way of life was intimately articulated by art. Being a Dominican, and therefore a mendicant friar, Fra Angelico's being an artist was part of formation sustained by a call, or vocation, which reflected a theological choice. Just as being a member of a religious Order like that of the Mendicants<sup>17</sup> meant *living* a life of poverty together with most of the people who either begged or lived a life of subsistence, so being an artist meant that one's form of life *subsists* on divine providence and a full engagement with the world through prayer. Prayer remains key to Fra Angelico's works of art. They are an engagement with colour, as well as light, and all those forms of appearance that together would make a phenomenological chain that we now call 'art'.

Fra Angelico gave the secular world (from within his mendicant life) an image of heaven. His heaven was absolved from a fixed form. This happened on two planes: *theologically* by means of his depiction of Divine Grace, and *artistically* by means of the fluidity of light. Fra Angelico reclaimed the humanism of space from the flatness of a monistic theocracy. As a mendicant he also brought his faith closer to the people, whose life also followed a mendicant lifestyle.<sup>18</sup> He propagated the sanctity of human history and painted its stories for the contemplation of an ultimate form of salvation. In his work, redemption emerged from the concepts of light and colour, only to be returned to the aspirations of human beings (saints and sinners alike).

Through his art Fra Angelico appropriated the manner of naming for himself. His was a process that, like most artists', settled its own meanings with the possibilities of the phenomena of a spiritual order where a number of names would facilitate a special kind of art. Like his names, Angelico's paintings were never objects of external acts of certainty. Truth was art's subject just as the eye was that of his colour and light. Even today, as we look at his paintings and maybe forget their original context, one can still see how the idea of truth as received by art implied that Angelico participated in the rendition of Truth's appearance.

Like the name and the colour, art retains the power to facilitate truth as a phenomenological mechanism by which subjects come to behold aspects of a comprehensive reality. In this way, the image is empowered and achieves a degree of autonomy. The autonomy of the image follows a similar course by which Angelico achieved an accrued autonomy as Guidolino, Giovanni da Fiesole, and ultimately as 'Beato Angelico'. The latter name remained a 'beatification' that was enacted by the people, rather than the Pope. This is indicative of Angelico's ultimate autonomy, which his name gained by dint of his art. Ultimately Angelico retained for himself and his art a full and viable individuality.

### **Law (or a Problem)**

Here I would like to momentarily return to Wittgenstein's two arguments: (i) that colour concepts are not universal, and (ii) that phenomenological problems do not constitute a phenomenology.

As a language-game, the negotiation of a commonly acceptable and effective definition of colour calls for an agreed ground on which a name *gives* logical form to the convention by

which we agree and define something. If one accepts that colour-concepts could never be universal, then one must establish whether the act of *naming a colour* belongs to the criterion for what is a colour. Furthermore, if one accepts (on the other end of Wittgenstein's argument) that phenomenological problems *do* exist, though they do not necessarily constitute an identifiable phenomenology. If one attends to Goethe's assertion that problems with some kinds of colour-perceptions are phenomenological problems (where Goethe indicates atmospheric colours, as an example), then a further question becomes pertinent: Is the *naming of a colour* a phenomenological problem?

If naming-a-colour *is* a phenomenological problem, then it would have to ascend or emerge according to the law of phenomena as an ur-phenomenon. As Goethe puts it, nature "makes no jumps. It could not make a horse, for example, if it had not first made all the other animals, by way of which, as on a ladder, it ascends to the structure of the horse." (Nisbet 1972, p. 11) This calls for a convention for negotiating the laws of colour with the evolution of colour. The implication of a law—whether negotiated in a language-game, or accepted a priori—must also legitimise the plural nature of individual definitions of colour.

Furthermore, if naming a colour *is* a phenomenological problem, then we have to establish which of the following is true. On one hand, we can either argue that it is necessary for the naming of a colour to ascend to a totality presumed by law. On the other hand, there could be an argument stating that the naming of a colour does not presume a law, because if it did so, it must provide a solution. If it *had* a solution, it would cease to be a problem. It is important to bear in mind that in presuming a law for a chain of appearances, we have to presume a phenomenology. This would mean that Wittgenstein's case for a phenomenological problem

will have to be reversed, and any argument for naming a colour would be premised on a phenomenological method.

Where we to conclude that naming a colour *is not* a phenomenological problem, then would this imply that we have to refrain from the whole issue of ur-phenomena and refuse a totality which is presumed by (Goethe's Leibnitzian) construct of a phenomenal chain? By refusing this construct of progressive causality, the naming of a colour cannot tally with a scenario of a *necessary* language by which we would establish an agreed recognition of colour. Rather, naming a colour would be construed as situational and thereby contingent. This also means that colour would have to provide itself with a syntax that functions as a semantic ground that would infer and endorse itself as a self-named construct. Furthermore, it would imply that naming-a-colour cannot presume a universal law. If it does presume a self-named convention, it will be determined by the individuality that infers it as if it were continuously self-adopted by its own grammar.

The bottom line of the argument for a law of colour represents nothing but one fact: a general law and a universal meaning for naming a colour is either a tautology or nonsense. Wittgenstein's conclusion rejects the establishment of any *theory* of colour. This is because a theory of colour would suggest "the logic of colour concepts," and more importantly it only achieves "what people have often unjustly expected of a theory." (Wittgenstein 1990, I §22, p. 5)

**IX. Art's remit has no boundaries except its own. This is where art's event is marked by the freedom by which we name the world and give it purpose through names, colours,**



and laws. Yet, art is also a sign that has no instrumental purposiveness as it frequently presents itself as an *empty signifier*. An empty signifier moves beyond the law when this becomes insufficient and irrelevant. Only the contingency of phenomena could explain how an empty signifier is presumed by the *condition* of these events. At will, such phenomena could *interrupt* by way of *transpiring* the absence of law. In their separate singularity, art and education become such phenomena.

By replacing theory with a *logic* of colour one rejects the argument that because we have no criterion for what is a colour it should be implicit. Here we find a split between object and subject (or a difference between individual and universal names). Beyond any distinction between subject and object, a *logic* of colour would take the defining (and learning) process back into the specificity of the subject. It makes no difference whether the subject is colour itself or the agent of its mixing (and definition). In Wittgenstein's words: "When dealing with logic, 'One cannot imagine that' means one doesn't know what one should imagine here." (Wittgenstein 1990, I §27, p. 6)

Any logic of colour concepts is distinct from the possible or impossible general criterion to name a colour. It follows that in the logic of naming my colours, I do not assume a law. Rather, I (i) recognise the specificity of colour as an act of self-mediation (and self-naming); and (ii) negotiate the *form* with the *meaning* of colour. The examples of an artist and a child, both mixing colour in their different intentional contexts, provide a parallel distinction.

The artist will recognise the specificity of colour as an act of self-mediation (and self-naming). She negotiates her form with the act that names the form, in her act of giving a form

to a name. When a child is mixing colour ('in whatever way') she will likewise negotiate her laws because she remains aware (in *act* and *fact*) of the irrelevance of a law. Because she does not need a law, the child is free to negotiate her colour mixing. Her main objective lies in the epistemological participation by which colour must be mixed and by which the child gains something from colour's signifying influence. As meaning takes over the form of colour, one could see how strictly speaking, the language-game of colour lies within the child's remit.

### **Art's Event**

Naming a colour is an *event* because it marks the moment when colour gains individuality. While naming a colour does not affect the colour *per se* (i.e., in its physical state), it bears effect on its appearance just as questions bear an effect on how they are answered and contextualised. The act of naming is not dissimilar from questioning. Heidegger (1987, p. 5) describes questioning as "a privileged happening," an *event* where "the content and the object of the question react inevitably on the act of questioning." This means that such questioning "is not just any occurrence but a privileged happening that we call *event*."

In naming a colour, we encounter an *event*. This event is *conditioned* by how we play the language-game by which we name our colours. As previously suggested, the language-games in play define the mixing of colour (and thus, colour itself) as an act of perception, interaction, having concepts, seeing difference, and building chromatic grammars by which we name our self.

In naming a colour, the name corresponds with a specific set of objectives by which we identify colour with *purpose*. The purpose of colour has to do with the objective grounds

without which the act of naming a colour becomes mere speculation. So the event of naming is not a speculative moment of phenomenology. Rather it has a *legislative purpose*, what Wittgenstein identified in possibility as a logical form, even when it does not respond to a speculative law. The event of naming is significant because it confirms colour's possible logical form while precluding it from becoming law. So while rejecting the notion of a general criterion for naming a colour, naming a colour remains pertinent to its objects.

The act of naming a colour is a pragmatic event that corresponds to specific moments of reality. It has nothing to do with conceptual abstraction, and cannot afford to become an object of speculation. As a pragmatic event colour retains two forms of possibility. In the first instance colour is purposeful. It provides the tools with which the logic of colour can function. Also colour is always seen to as a proper concept. This means that colour mediates itself — i.e., it provides us with the scenario where red as red does not suffice unless it is seen as specific to its act *as* red (not as blue, or reddish green; yellow or reddish orange).

### **Art as Sign**

Wittgenstein's colour-blind tribe does not have the same colour-concepts as those of the colour-sighted. However, like a colour-sighted tribe they partake of the event of naming their colours by which they communicate. Any colour is specific to its logical purpose. It is difficult for the colour-sighted to translate the colour-blind's colour-names, and it is difficult for the former to understand the latter's colour language-games. But it could be argued that as different events, the colour-sighted and the colour-blind's naming presume a common need to uphold the specificity of colour in their language-games.

However, while we can say that the colour-blind tribe shares with the colour-sighted a common necessity (that of the *event*) one cannot say that the colour-sighted event shares the same name with that of the colour-blind tribe. The purpose of the event is different, even if the event as a purpose is common to both. This reiterates the fact that the naming of the event is the *condition* posed by the language-game that defines colour. The outcome of colour-sighted language-games poses a *condition* informed by questions of perception, interaction, concept, and difference that differ according to the concept of the colours that are *seen*. At this point one becomes aware that the word *blind* in the term colour-*blind* confirms the limitations found in the vocabulary that is used by a colour-sighted majority. This vocabulary is insufficient when it comes to define the nature of the colour-blind's sight. Wittgenstein's notion of colour-blindness is primarily concerned with such a limit, where what is assumed to be superior, is in effect much more inferior and incomplete.

As exposed by the logic of the colour-blind tribe, the limited definition of colour-sightedness takes us to the definition of colour as a sign. If there is a central condition to the naming of colour, it must fall within the realms of its semiotic nature. When we speak of colour we need to draw a distinction between its meaning and its form. In its syntactical structure the logic of colour is distanced from colour's semantic necessity. It becomes an empty signifier. Ernesto Laclau (1996, p. 37) argues that, "an empty signifier can, consequently, only emerge if there is a structural impossibility in signification as such, and if this impossibility can only signify itself as an interruption (subversion, distortion, etc.) of the structure of the sign."

If we argue that the condition posed by the language-game that names a colour presumes an empty signifier, and if, in addition, we say that this has the purpose to legitimise the event that names the colour, then how could an empty signifier have a purpose? Wittgenstein (1990, I §14, p. 4) remarks that, “there is no *commonly* accepted criterion for what is a colour, unless it is one of our colours.” Going with this conclusion, we have to ask: How could the name of a colour function on a unitary purpose (such as art or education), if the naming of a colour could not presume universality? If the event of naming a colour presumes a purpose for colour in the form of its objective ground, then it is not an empty signifier. Likewise, if the same naming does legitimise an act, it already has signification. This presents us with the condition of the event of naming as a tautological cycle. This also raises a question about the way with which a cycle could fit within “an impossibility” as shown above by Laclau. (1996, p. 37)

In the process of signification the empty signifier lies *beyond* the name and the event because it is found beyond the law. The condition has to be explained not in terms of the law, but in terms of the phenomenon. This could only reiterate what we have established earlier: a general law is insufficient and renders itself irrelevant when trying to apply a universal semantic for naming a colour. Only the situational contingency of phenomena could explain how an empty signifier is presumed by the *condition* that controls the event of naming colour. Because it is an ‘interruption,’ the phenomenon subverts the law and stands outside the law. It actually *transpires* the very absence of the law.

In a Kantian manner, one could argue that the phenomenon (which is *neither* a phenomenology *nor* a phenomenological problem) is an *a priori* assumption of the condition

that names the event. Placed within the order of a meta-language, it would assume its own law in various ways: as “a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions.” (See Barthes 1973, pp. 126-7)

Like Kant’s notion of judgement, a meta-language has no legislative reality. But unlike judgement, it does not need a legislative reality to be linguistically expressed. This is because a meta-language (which includes images, sounds, colour, forms, desires ...) is never limited to linguistic expressions alone. Unlike judgement, a meta-language would neither have nor would it need a “territory with a certain character for which no other principle can be valid.” (Kant 1974, Introduction §III, p. 13) As in the case of art, within its specificity a meta-language (which does include events of artistic activity but not exclusively) would mediate its own ground. A meta-language (which is *neither* a ‘phenomenology’ *nor* a ‘phenomenological problem’) does not fill an absence between cognitive faculties and the faculties of desire. Rather, it belongs to both while it may well remain absent from both cognition and desire.

**X. Art and education are moments of hegemony. Yet we have established that while art is bound to sustain contradiction, it cannot be *applied* through politics or education. Epistemologies that conflate art with education are useless. If art and education were exercised as hegemonic moments to seek coherence and identity, they would fail. Hegemonic conditions that are forced through art and education are artificial constructs. Rather than the certainties of social and cultural common sense on which constructivists have relied in attaining consciousness and emancipation, what really matters is the singularity of categories that succeed by dint of their contingent and**

**contradictory praxes. Hegemony will only prevail if its contingent conditions are preserved within a *universality of particulars*. This is only attained when art and education are sustained as empty signifiers that refuse to function as methods of measure and equivalence.**

When people are in a situation of radical disorder, people need some kind of order, and the nature of the particular order is secondary. This relationship in which a certain particular content assumes the function of a universal fullness which is totally incommensurate with it is exactly what I call a *hegemonic relationship*. (Laclau 1999, p. 7)

We are still unresolved as to how colour is an empty signifier. We need to establish how colour as form relates to its meaning. We are still unclear as to how, by accepting that there are no universal criteria for naming a colour, the logic of colour makes the event of naming a phenomenological problem. We have to establish how, confronted by the structural impossibility of its signification, the condition that makes the event of naming the possible could stand as such.

My attempted explanation came from excluding the law from this structural impossibility. But this leads to another kind of impossibility where colour cannot be a sign (as a unified form and meaning), and where it remains an empty signifier (as a form without meaning). This suggests that a phenomenological problem is impossible. It also brings us back to square one as it means that a reason must be found for the presumption of a universal condition by

which naming a colour is regarded as a phenomenological problem, even if this condition is limited to the individuality of colour.

At this point, any answer cannot be found in the logic of colour. We have to move into the *politics* of the meta-language within which art, amongst others, entertains is autonomous capability of dealing with external manifestations such as *name* and *colour* by which art itself is often defined and referenced. Here I seek an explanation beyond the customary canon of art theory or philosophy of art. Rather, I would like to engage with political theory, and more specifically the dialectical logic by which Laclau's work deals with difference and equivalence as implied by what he calls "concrete struggles," where the relationship becomes evidently hegemonic. As I try to find a way of explaining art through a discourse of naming, logic and the law, I would then move to the epilogue for this chapter in which I would attempt to draw together the loose ends by which art and education could find ways to avoid becoming coextensive in their different legislative, semiotic and political *whereabouts*.

Laclau (1996, p. 41) presents a situation where the "meaning (the signified) of all concrete struggles appears, right from the beginning, internally divided." Struggle implies not simply an internal dispute, but also a struggle with what confronts it. In this respect Laclau presents two meanings: the first one "establishes the differential character of that demand (ibid.)", the second one "establishes the equivalence of all these demands in their common opposition to the system (ibid.)." This immediately presents a contradiction, not only in the directions expected, which seem to go in their opposite ways, but also in how without a certain or clear strategy we are presented with a series of possibilities that are "simply the result of every



single struggle being always already, originally, penetrated by this constitutive ambiguity.” (ibid.)

The parallel positioning of the logical problematic of colour and the political problematic of signification (or indeed meaning) within “concrete struggles” (which we find expressed in art and related contexts that emerge in the aesthetic imaginary) might begin to explain why many epistemological questions (such as those which relate art with education) remain unanswered. Both issues are tied to the fundamental distinction between what is *said* and what is *shown*, as Wittgenstein’s classic distinction goes where: “What *can* be shown *cannot* be said,” (Wittgenstein 1992, §4.1212).

Wittgenstein’s statement cannot remain formulaic and must be understood on the grounds of practice where signs are confronted by symbols and where meaning often challenges form. In art this is easily illustrated by how what is said and what is shown remain distinct. Here we could take a distance from Wittgenstein’s logical exposition of colour, even when the manner by which colour relates to a sign, and that of “concrete struggles” continues to share common forms with both art and the polity (which includes the sphere of education).

As we move from practice to theory and back, we realise how this permeates struggle because at the end of the day art exists in its relationship to a *polity*, whether inferred from a law presumed *a priori* from the name-event of narratives like those of colour, or from a legislative structure presumed by the “concrete aim of the struggle.” More so, art answers to the same ground of dispute and learning by which we have identified a third moment of pedagogy—after the moments of description (qua reason) and infatuation (qua desire)—where the *agôn* expresses and relates to a commonly assumed set of problems that emerge

from the tension between exclusive and sectarian forms of *citizenhood* and an emancipatory and critical citizenship.

In concrete struggle (as in the logic of colour) we presume a political syntax that has to do with how we supplement language with a system of images that invests meaning with form and vice versa. Indeed, “that which mirrors itself in language, language cannot represent” (Wittgenstein 1992, §4.121, p. 79) because its form (the signifier) is distanced from the meaning (the signified). While the signified poses a political question, the signifier’s interest belongs to logic. The signified has to practically *say* what the signifier has theoretically *shown*.

Being the domain of the signified, the political question reveals, by its presence, the insufficiency of our sign systems. While this is no excuse to dismiss language and its consequent sign systems as incomplete, we cannot forget that the questions that are raised also come down to the individuality of the facts that are involved—whether they happen to be colour, learning, perception, opinion, or struggle. One could suggest that phenomenological problems are mainly forms that do not have corresponding meanings by necessity. Phenomenological problems are called into question when a number of ethical issues are raised. In this context, a moral imagination that begins to articulate how we approach such insufficient sign systems may well have to do with the convention of colour as a communicable category (which is a myth). Likewise emergent political imaginaries are likely to respond to a collective objective that prompts and calls for some form of political struggle that aims to redress the injustices that sectarian and exclusive polities are likely to sustain. Laclau argues that such a contradictory movement is bound to operate in a way that both

asserts and proscribes its own singular possibilities. This is because such a situation infers such movement *a priori* by a form (the signifier) that is absent from the meaning (signified).

### **A Pedagogical Solution?**

In its autonomy, art is bound to capture this dilemma, and it is all too quick to sustain this contradictory set of currents and counter-currents. Art also struggles to put this across when it comes to operate in heteronomous ways, i.e., when someone tries to apply it through spheres like politics or education.

These questions also raise the legislative issue of the event whose naming is insufficiently signified by the totality it infers from its own individuality. Thus, would the signifier be the cause or the effect of the contradictory movement? Would the contradictory movement (which, in the case of colour, we identified as the *condition* for the name and the event) be the ground-rule for those language-games that stake the meaning of the concrete struggle, and the semantic negotiation of a collective convention?

This question might find an answer in the analogy of *mixing*. It is by now clear that *mixing* is an event that beholds colour to its specificity. Mixing is akin to a learning process that names (and regales with speciality) colour in its individuality. By implication, mixing also names the world in its actuality—that is, as an emerging state of affairs by which women and men give each other meaning and significance through a viable meta-narrative of sign systems, of meanings and of forms. Here one begins to realize that learning and struggle are equivalent (often interchangeable) categories. More so, the politics of colour bears a direct

relevance to the pedagogy of colour, and with it the pedagogical relations by which we name the world.

To name the world is to assume a ground of sorts that articulates a moral imaginary by which culture serves as a pedagogical, as well as an ethical ground of signification. This kind of signification is very evident in Antonio Gramsci's quest for a cultural answer to what his contemporary *pragmatist* theorists of language have seen as a linguistic obstacle to the elimination of illusory contrasts.<sup>19</sup> Gramsci argues that the obstacles of language are caused by socio-historical differences and distinctions as reflected in common language (*linguaggio*). His instinct favours equivalence, which, as cited above, Laclau considers as impossible in the case of the concrete struggle, mostly because "the function of representing the system as a totality depends, consequently, on the possibility of the equivalential function neatly prevailing over the differential one; but this possibility is simply the result of every single struggle being always already, originally, penetrated by this constitutive ambiguity." (Laclau 1996, p. 41)

Gramsci proposes that the position taken by a pragmatist theory makes it even more important for us to recognise what he calls the "cultural moment" (*momento culturale*). "Across board, culture brings together a larger or lesser number of individuals on many levels; more or less on a level of expression where they understand each other at different stages ... and so on. It is such diversity and social-historic difference that is reflected in common language (*linguaggio*), bringing about those 'obstacles' and 'causes of error' which the pragmatists have discussed." (Gramsci 1975, pp. 30-31).

The ‘cultural moment’ bears upon all activities that we collectively are responsible for. In this respect a collective moment—indeed a collective sense of humanity—begins to signify heterogeneity. In Gramsci’s opinion “the importance of the question of language in general—that is, the collective achievement of the same cultural ‘climate’—becomes evident” by this need to articulate a heterogeneity collectively. (Gramsci 1975, pp. 30-31)

In Gramsci’s mind this is an intrinsically pedagogical issue, where the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal, and where the teacher is at times pupil and the pupil is at times teacher. Gramsci adds that the pedagogical relationship cannot be limited to the school. Rather, it is extended to the social and cultural aspects of human relationships where every hegemonic relationship is recognized as pedagogical. On this plane, there seems to be an equivalence that ultimately metes out and rationalizes the relationship. At the very least it rationalizes the struggle.

### **Laclau’s Model**

Unlike Gramsci, Laclau goes beyond equivalence. The hope that ultimately the hegemonic-pedagogical axis will prevail over the hegemonic-coercive structure is, in Laclau’s definition of hegemony, overtaken by the prevalence of empty signification.

To start with, Laclau (1996) argues that the “presence of empty signifiers (...) is the very condition of hegemony.” (p. 43) He regards this as a way of moving beyond what he regards as a stumbling block in most theories of hegemony, including Gramsci’s. In order to avoid this stumbling block we need to understand what the broader aims for emancipation really mean. Laclau identifies two possibilities by which we can do so.

The first one has to do with society being regarded as “an addition of discrete groups, each tending to their particular aims and in constant collision with each other.” (Laclau 1996 p. 43) Here, Laclau explains, “‘broader’ and ‘wider’ could only mean the precarious equilibrium of a negotiated agreement between groups, all of which would retain their conflicting aims and identity.” (p. 44) However this is problematic to regard as hegemonic (and thereby, in our case, pedagogical), because “‘hegemony’ clearly refers to a stronger type of communitarian unity than such an agreement evokes.” (p. 44)

The second possibility is that “society has some kind of pre-established essence, so that the ‘broader’ and ‘vaster’ has a content of its own, independent of the will of the particular groups, and that ‘hegemony’ would mean the realisation of such an essence.” (Laclau 1996, p. 44) The problem with this is that it:

would not only do away with the dimension of contingency which has always been associated with the hegemonic operation, but would also be incompatible with the consensual character of ‘hegemony’: the hegemonic order would be the *imposition* of a pre-given organisational principle and not something emerging from the political interaction between groups. (Laclau 1996, p. 43-44)

Going by Gramsci’s pedagogical qualities of hegemony one could see why Laclau’s critique has a lot to contribute to the difficulties, which are aggravated by the coextension of art, culture and education. If, as in the first instance, art, culture and education are exercised as hegemonic moments by which a precarious equilibrium is negotiated between groups in order to attain false sense of social coherence and identity, then this fails pathetically because the hegemonic conditions are forced, and therefore constructed artificially by those

progressives and liberals who think that a socially just and a pragmatic arrangement could be manufactured on the backs of a negotiated settlement, which does not reflect the social and economic realities.

In other words, if the school is used as a hegemonic instrument for wider democratisation to mediate society through art and culture, this will lead to failure. This is because such constructs would be precariously negotiated on assumptions without having any regard to the grounds on which they continuously emerge. This attempt will also backfire because the hegemonic opportunities by which the school would do so would not only come disjointed, but they would move in the opposite direction by incrementing the condition of oppression and de-sublimation—thereby confirming Marcuse’s scenario of one dimensionality.

In the second instance, if through art and culture the pedagogic condition of hegemony assumes that there is a pre-established *essence* or *totality* by which society would bring together pragmatically and progressively (what Gramsci sees as) a broad and vast content that it presumes to have, it would be ignoring many groups whose intentions do not conform with this essence or totality. This hegemony would, (a) fail to realise this presumed social and democratic essence, and (b) suppress the very contingency by which it has sustained itself as a hegemonic operation. This means that it would find no way of connecting with what has been assumed as a “consensual character of ‘hegemony’”, thus resulting in the stultification of those possible political interactions between the groups that make society in the first place.

Laclau’s solution runs contrary to both Gramsci and the approaches taken by progressive, liberal and constructivist strategies with which we are all too familiar in educational discourse. More so, it contradicts those forms of discourse that seek to co-opt art education

with forms of critical pedagogy by which they claim to liberate social consciousness from reification. In response to these scenarios, which Laclau identifies as stumbling blocks in the theories of hegemony, he suggests that, “if we consider the matter from the point of view of the social production of empty signifiers, this problem vanishes.” (Laclau 1996, p. 43)

How? One might ask. Laclau’s approach is clear: from the point of view of the social production of empty signifiers, “the hegemonic operation would be the presentation of the particularity of a group as the incarnation of that empty signifier which refers to the communitarian order *as an absence, and unfulfilled reality* (Laclau 1996, p. 43-44 emphasis added).

We can see how the *cultural moment* as ethically imposed to resolve the syntactical problem of language would, in Laclau’s model, go beyond Gramsci’s and most of the progressive and liberal assumptions that have been applied to education, the arts and culture in the wider literature of critical pedagogy. Rather than the certainties of social and cultural common sense on which constructivist theories have relied in attaining forms of emancipation—be it social, educational, cultural or artistic—Laclau’s analysis dwells on the singularity of categories that are incongruent from a universal point of view, but which would gain strong feasibility from the perspective of their individual and contingent praxes.

As this somehow goes back to the dialectical logic by which Hegel assumes art from the realms of individuality, which in this chapter I took further into the realms of historical contingency, Laclau’s position re-defines Gramsci’s notion of a *cultural moment*. More in line with the negative nature of *Bildung* in Hegel, and less in line with the collective ambitions of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony qua education, Laclau’s strategy does not arise



from a common urge to unify the heterogeneous consequence of syntactic individuality into semantic universality. Instead it does the contrary. Laclau's strategy is primarily aimed at the recognition and use of the condition by which a signifier is emptied into a vehicle of semantic transformation, and where in return the signified makes possible "the presentation of the particularity of a group as the incarnation of that empty signifier which refers to the communitarian order as an absence, and unfulfilled reality." (Laclau 1996, p. 44)

In this respect the hegemony (and with it art, culture and education) is preserved if the mechanism by which language seeks to universalise itself (as a would-be remedy for syntactic obstacles) is suspended. Another way of looking at this suspension of hegemony is to look at it as a reversal into the *universality of particulars* by dint of individuality. Again this goes back to our discussion of the Notion, or individuality, which (as seen in Hegel's dialectical logic) continues to sustain the possibilities of a dialectical procedure even when it appears to foreclose it through triangulation.

Laclau's model allows us to retain the necessity of universality (whether as a syntax or as a mechanism for struggle) by containing it within the specificity of language-games that create a multiplicity of events, and that result in a multiplicity of meanings. On the other hand Gramsci's solution, like Goethe's cyclic chain, poses a phenomenal ladder as the solution for the phenomenological problem.

Additionally, Laclau's model values empty signifiers, and does not see any viable solution in the attempt to *transform* them into signs of equivalence. This urges us to read further into Wittgenstein's logic of colour as one instance in the logic of the possible where the quick-fix

of rational certainty—be it democratic, educationalist, liberal, progressive or indeed critical—becomes somewhat irrelevant.

In this chapter I wanted to show how the ultimate choice for art and education is not one between individuality and collectivity. Rather the choice is found in how our forms—indeed what we *make*—could value difference and make it work. As art, our forms of making could only lead to the meaning of difference once we endorse difference as that which emerged in Wittgenstein’s model of colour and Laclau’s model of concrete struggle.

To use the analogy of the colour-blind tribe, colour-blindness becomes the rule and not the exception. Only the possibility of its plurality as colour-blindness-es, would begin to articulate a strategy by which we could approach and get close to achieve emancipation through the possibility of the same paradox by which art approaches the need to learn as a form of unlearning. Here the penultimate word must go to Wittgenstein when he asks, “Can one describe to a blind person what it’s like for someone to *see*?” His answer is crystal clear, yet somehow challenging: “Certainly. The blind learn a great deal about the difference between the blind and the sighted. But the question was badly put; as though seeing were an activity and there were a description of it.” (Wittgenstein 1990, I §81, p. 13)

Come to think of it, it may well be that the answers given us by the politics of social reform, democracy, liberty and education were not exactly wrong. Many answers were right. But a great insurmountable obstacle remains in the question.

## SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

By way of summarising the overall themes of this chapter, I will here list the ten corresponding axioms that introduced this essay's sections.

- I. Art education's viability comes from the specificity of art and the singularity of education as autonomous spheres of human endeavour, and as phenomena of the human freedom and intelligence.
- II. A possible rejection of schooled art is sought in the variegated distinctions that emerge from art's facticity and autonomy where the dialectic takes precedence over method.
- III. Art seeks to unlearn the grammar of an ideational prototype. As unlearning, art thereby confirms our contingency. By asserting their own vernacular understanding of the world, women and men reaffirm freedom and intelligence on whose horizons art regains autonomy.
- IV. Art reveals how pedagogy moves beyond mere technical procedure. By dint of education's singularity, *pedagogy* provides an agôn, an opportunity for argument that stems from the recurrent moments of human expression in the moments of *information* and *infatuation*. Being coextensive and never deterministic, information and infatuation broadly explain how by its intimacy with knowledge and desire, pedagogy takes an immanent form.
- V. While as agôn pedagogy ties desire to knowledge, by its transitory nature it moves into a third moment: that of the political. A split between *citizenhood* and *citizenship* challenges pedagogy as a political affair. As a schooled moment *citizenhood* is set

within a history of standardized monoliths. As we think of a counteroffensive, we await the praxis of citizenship, which is potentially realized through the singularity of education and the autonomy of art.

- VI. As art's autonomy reveals its paradoxical nature, the fallacy of *education as a system of coherent necessities* is confirmed. Rather than invalidating education, this restores its singularity. Education cannot be gambled within the interstices of learning and unlearning. If, on the other hand, we were to regard education as that which counters the normalisation and desublimation of the world, then what emerges from the interstices of learning and unlearning is yet to be defined.
- VII. If art were a tool of mediation, it would be a mere semblance of freedom, thereby losing the ability to claim autonomy. When we speak of art's autonomy, we also mean that there is no such thing as a *return* to a unitary origin, or a *fulfilment* of a preordained end. Rather, art *emerges* and *approaches* the world as a *dialectical* state of affairs where firstly, as a making, it remains anomalous of a universal or foundational principle, and secondly it rejects anything that appears to be given *a priori* in its form or content.
- VIII. We speak of art's autonomy in its *emergence* because as we describe art we describe ourselves. As an attribute of life and art, colour is one of the cases by which we make the world. In turn, to speak of colour is to say something about the words by which we name the world. To name is to reveal a law. When women and men become artists, they confirm that art is a form of life, often described through the use of language-games. As descriptions and games imply a law, they emerge from negotiations

between human beings. The law—whether negotiated in a language-game, or accepted as *given* prior to any experience—must not only appear and emerge from its acts of mixing contexts and forms, but allows us to affirm the plural nature of individual definitions by which art engages with the world.

- IX. Art's remit has no boundaries except its own. This is where art's event is marked by the freedom by which we name the world and give it purpose through names, colours, and laws. Yet, art is also a sign that has no instrumental purposiveness as it frequently presents itself as an *empty signifier*. An empty signifier moves beyond the law when this becomes insufficient and irrelevant. Only the contingency of phenomena could explain how an empty signifier is presumed by the *condition* of these events. At will, such phenomena could *interrupt* by way of *transpiring* the absence of law. In their separate singularity, art and education become such phenomena.
  
- X. Art and education are moments of hegemony. Yet we have established that while art is bound to sustain contradiction, it cannot be *applied* through politics or education. Epistemologies that conflate art with education are useless. If art and education were exercised as hegemonic moments to seek coherence and identity, they would fail. Hegemonic conditions that are forced through art and education are artificial constructs. Rather than the certainties of social and cultural common sense on which constructivists have relied in attaining consciousness and emancipation, what really matters is the singularity of categories that succeed by dint of their contingent and contradictory praxes. Hegemony will only prevail if its contingent conditions are preserved within a *universality of particulars*. This is only attained when art and

education are sustained as empty signifiers that refuse to function as methods of measure and equivalence.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a fascinating discussion of Nebrija's project and the implications that it had on how social institutions are universalized by the State see Illich 2009b, pp. 33-51.
- <sup>2</sup> Recently the notion of *Lego*, this time as a company, took an interesting turn with its refusal to provide Ai WeiWei with bricks that he requested to build his latest installation. The reaction was interesting in that this triggered a new kind of crowd sourcing, with many, including children, offering the artist their own Lego bricks. The political twist on this, involving the Chinese authorities' dislike for Ai WeiWei's work and the withdrawal of Lego as a corporation, seems to jar with the universalistic claim inhered in the concept of Lego *per se*, as a tool for play, creativity and education. For

details of the story see <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/oct/25/ai-weiwei-swamped-by-lego-donation-offers-after-ban-on-use-for-political-artwork>

- <sup>3</sup> Poole's context is mainly to do with whether Kierkegaard chooses to use a "Hegelian Lego" in his reconstruction of the concept of irony. Poole wonders if "[b]y the hallucinating use and reuse of a set of terms, infinitely recombined, the reader [of *The Concept of Irony*] gets the impression of a kind of vast intellectual mobile, a work of kinetic art that revolves and rotates and glitters in conceptual space. This multiple redefinition of terms drives constantly toward creating an aporia: that is its aim." (Poole 1993, p. 49)
- <sup>4</sup> Here, *intentions* follow Searle's sense, by which, he says, "I use 'intentionality' as a technical term meaning that feature of representations by which they are *about* something or *directed at* something." (Searle 1995, p. 7n)
- <sup>5</sup> I refer to Thomas Nagel's discussion of reality in the opening chapters of his seminal work, *The View from Nowhere*. (See Nagel 1986 pp. 24ff)
- <sup>6</sup> The *Langenscheidt Classical Greek-English* dictionary cites the meaning of *ágo* as follows: *trans.[itive]* to lead away, off, on, towards, to conduct, drive, bring, convey, fetch, to take along: to estimate; to direct, command, rule, instruct, guide; to keep (a festival), to spend. — *intr.[ansitive]* to march, move, pass.
- <sup>7</sup> *Agó* and *agôn* mean the following: assembly that implies both a consensual meeting-place, as well as a place of combat, where there is contest or dispute. This advances a further implication for an agency that moves towards dispute in terms of legality, but

also of argument per se. These words also imply the idea of exertion, labour, struggle and danger.

- 8 Here, I am not suggesting that there should be a rule where the etymological origin of a word dictates what it should do after so many centuries of usage. However, it is interesting to re-evaluate what we mean by pedagogy, particularly when we know that the word brings up diverse meanings in other languages. Nonetheless, I remain steadfast on refusing to reduce the meaning of pedagogy to that of a technique of teaching, something that is often the case when the word is used in a climate of training-oriented professional studies in education. Surely, the discipline is too rich in lineage and connotation to remain bereft of a wider context of meaning, particularly when a wider and richer usage of *pedagogy* remains the case in continental scholarship in education.
- 9 Note the word *curriculum* as derivative of *curro*: a running, at a run, a race, from which the further meanings of ‘raceground’, ‘course’ and ‘lap’ are derived.
- 10 For my discussion of exclusion in art and education see my book *Art’s Way Out. Exit Pedagogy and the cultural Condition*. (Baldacchino 2012)
- 11 For my critique of nostalgia and the fallacy of art as a form of return, see Baldacchino 2002 and Baldacchino 2015b, pp. 27-30.
- 12 Given that only recently the Catholic Church has witnessed another *gran rifiuto*, this time from Benedict XVI, who only follows Pope Gregory XII’s resignation from the Papacy in 1415, it now seems that Dante’s horror at the abdication of Celestine V in 1294 is rather overstated.

- 13 In his *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Umberto Eco describes Dionysius the Areopagite's work *De Divinis Nominibus* (*On the Divine Names*) as "a work which describes the universe as an inexhaustible irradiation of beauty, a grandiose expression of the ubiquity of the First Beauty, a dazzling cascade of splendours." For further discussion cf. Eco (1986), pp. 18ff.
- 14 On the distinction between the logic of the case and the logic of possibility see *Wittgenstein's Lectures. Cambridge, 1930-1932*. (Wittgenstein 1980 pp. 10ff)
- 15 In the context of this chapter's central discussion—art and education—this distinction should introduce a similar distinction between learning and unlearning as proper concepts (of possibility *qua* name) while distancing them away from the pseudo-concept (of form *qua* technical practice).
- 16 One must bear in mind that just like God, Dieu or Iddio, Allah is a noun meaning 'God' who in effect remains unnamed.
- 17 There were five original Mendicant Orders: the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, Augustinians and the Servites. Unlike Monastic Orders the mendicants sustained themselves by a life of begging, thus living like the majority of the population, by living in the streets before they began to live in friaries and convents, which were distinctly different from the Feudal Estates held by the old Monastic orders.
- 18 For a brilliant description of subsistence and the mendicant economy of the middle ages, see Ivan Illich's book *Shadow Work* (Illich 2009b), especially chapter III.

- <sup>19</sup> Gramsci refers specifically to G. Vailati's book *Il linguaggio come ostacolo alla eliminazione di contrasti illusori* (See Gramsci 1975, p. 30).